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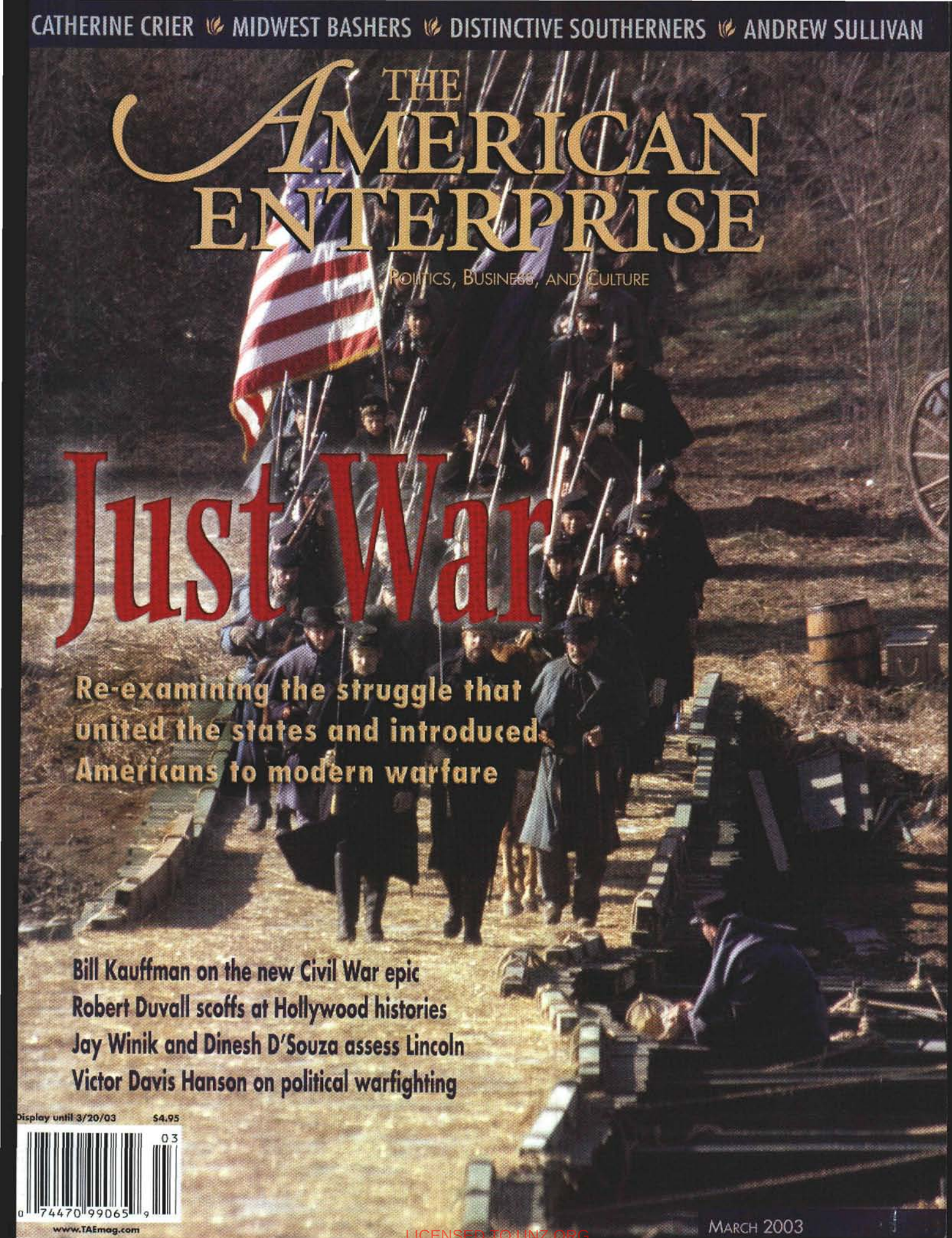

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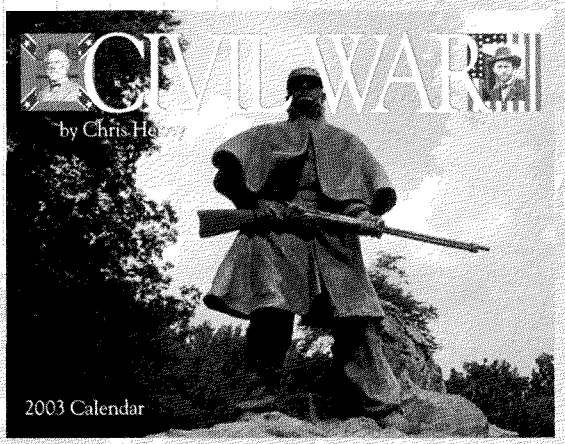

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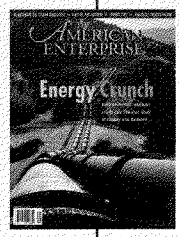

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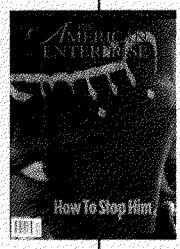

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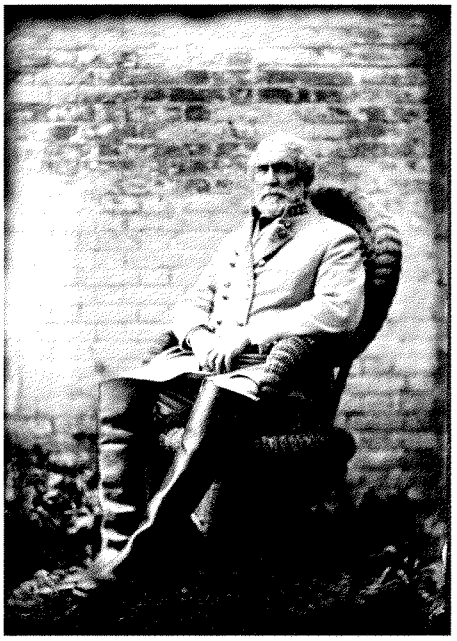

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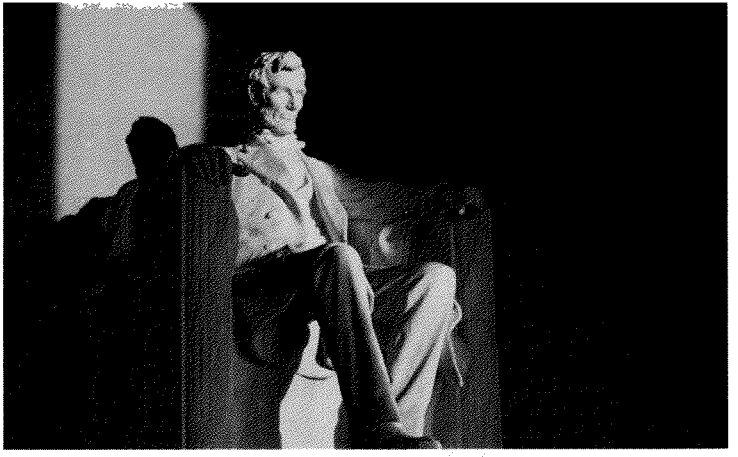

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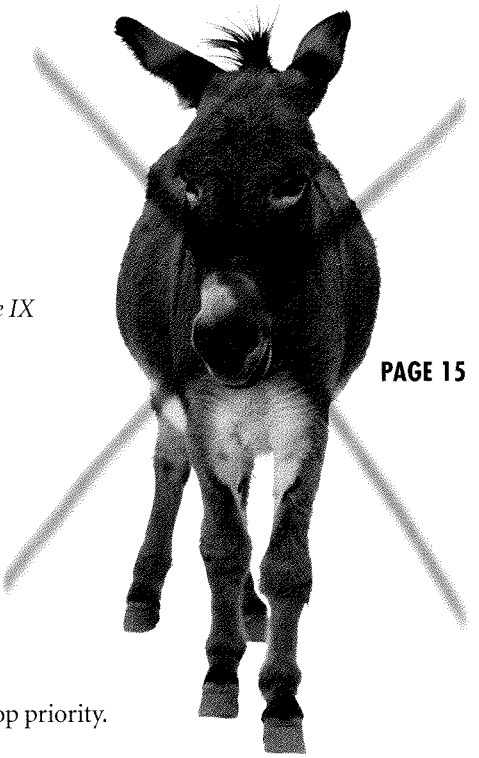

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Bird's Eye

Karl Zinsmeister

What Do You Mean, "A Good War"?

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It is sometimes said, including by me, that Americans don't know as much history as they ought to. But there is one era that many Americans *have* studied carefully—and that is our own Civil War epoch.

Indeed, national interest in the Civil War borders on obsession: over 60,000 books about the clash have been produced—more than one a day since Lee called it quits at Appomattox Court House. An amazing 7,000 volumes have been written about Lincoln alone, making him the most heavily investigated figure in American history.

And our fascination with the Civil War is rising, not falling. Your editors added up registered visits to a dozen of the top battlefields and found a double-digit increase over the last decade. Civil War re-enactments—of which we visited several this summer—have become huge attractions, drawing thousands of participants, tens of thousands of spectators, even scores of corporate sponsors. And three weeks after this issue of *TAE* is released, the grandest and truest film ever made about the War Between the States—a $56 million extravaganza—will open in theaters all across America.

Why do these events 140 years past engross us so? One of the purest reasons, I believe, is the noble nature of many of the men involved. Robert E. Lee was the only man ever to pass through West Point without earning a single demerit in four years (an almost unfathomable feat—most cadets pile up hundreds). "The most sublime word is duty," stated Lee, and he meant it. He never gave a newspaper interview in his life, and steadfastly refused to write his memoirs, saying "I would be trading on the blood of my men." There was no vanity in this leader; he was revered by almost all who shouldered a burden with him. "I've heard of God," remarked one of his soldiers, "but I've *seen* General Lee."

Not that he lacked humanity: Lee loved to dance, he was an energetic (though chaste) flirt, and he was as fine a family man as ever lived. He kissed and caressed his children lavishly, and bribed them to tickle his feet. His letters home are breathtakingly tender. "Of how many great generals can it be said that they wrote their children more often than their children wrote them?" asks Roy Blount in a forthcoming biography. After his son Rooney cut off two fingertips playing with a straw cutter and then had them sewn back on by a surgeon, Lee sat up several nights in a row to make sure the bandages stayed put while his son slept.

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Lee's virtues are well known; what's much less appreciated is that Ulysses S. Grant was a man with an equally big heart and sterling character. Grant was raised poor on a single-family farm in Ohio, after his attentive father left Kentucky because he couldn't stand being around the kind of people who made slaves do their hard work for them. His autobiography may be the most impressive ever written by a U.S. political figure, and reveals a rock of self-effacing manliness. During all his combat experiences Grant never panicked, and he was not known to have used a profane expletive at any time in his life. In his private dealings before the war Grant exhibited great fairness toward all people he came in contact with, and several times quietly intervened to stop abuse of slaves by those around him.

Grant was extremely tough, and a strict disciplinarian. And he applied this toughness to himself, for instance to conquer his drinking habit. Yet he, too, was gentle and loving, doting on his family, and missing them sorely when separated. Even amidst combat, Grant brought his pre-teen son with him to various fronts. He refused to entertain the idea that his wife Julia should have surgery to fix her crossed eyes, insisting he loved her exactly the way she was.

Lincoln was another Civil War figure who combined extraordinary decency with high purpose. He as well was a devoted father and attentive husband, who never wavered in his loyalty to a difficult wife. A man of great sympathy, he took time to write heartfelt letters comforting total strangers. And Lincoln didn't flinch under the horrible strain of his position, bravely executing some of the most difficult decisions ever made by an American, while leaving behind a store of political philosophy and literary rhetoric that will continue to inspire humans to the end of time. (See the reflections by Jay Winik and Dinesh D'Souza starting on page 26.)

Such men bloomed on many trees during our great national cataclysm. Stephen Lang, the actor who portrays "Stonewall" Jackson in *Gods and Generals*, the new Civil War feature film, comments that "If you take a deep look into the life of Jackson and other men of that era, you realize how deeply and purely those men lived. Among other things, the complete lack of cynicism of most nineteenth-century Americans is amazing."

Early in *Gods and Generals* is a scene quite lengthy (at least in the preliminary cut I saw) of Jackson reading from 2nd Corinthians ("We know that if our earthly house…were dissolved, we have a building of God…not made with human hands, eternal in the heavens") and praying enthusiastically with his wife. "It was difficult to transport modern viewers to the ethical universe of the men and women of the Civil War era," states director Ron Maxwell. "Re-creating the morality of this period was by far the most challenging part of the film."

The thing to keep in mind is that Northerners and Southerners alike were fighting essentially over matters of principle.

It's one thing to find great men among the leaders of an upheaval. What's more significant is to find large numbers of principled and determined individuals among the rank and file. And in our Civil War, the serried ranks and swollen files contained untold numbers of inspiring citizen soldiers. The remarkable thing about our Civil War is that in battle after battle, men on both sides plunged repeatedly into hellish danger, spontaneously offering up astonishing acts of courage and selflessness. At a time when the nation was only one eighth as big as it is today, the Civil War killed a dozen times more men than did the Vietnam conflict.

"The armies of Europe are machines," wrote Grant in his memoir, "the majority of the soldiers…have very little interest in the contest in which they are called to take part." But America's armies were "composed of men who were able to read, men who knew what they were fighting for."

Take General Sherman's invasion force. Gathered along America's western frontier, its divisions were the least urbane of all those in the Union. Yet (contrary to some claims) this was no rabble. When they overran Milledgeville, Georgia, where the State House was located, Sherman's soldiers spontaneously organized a legislature, replete with exciting debates on the situation in the South and the nation. After some spirited oratory, they went so far as to repeal, with mock votes, Georgia's ordinance of secession.

Another little hint of the intelligence, political-mindedness, and idealism of these citizen soldiers is the particular, offended dislike they took to the bloodhounds they found on most plantations. These animals were used to hunt down runaway slaves; as a result, they were killed on the spot wherever the troops encountered them. If you think the Union soldiers were just doing a job, and lacked feeling for the political causes that sent them South—abolition of slavery, opposition to aristocratic royalism, and offense at a rebellion which threatened to dismember their nation—I invite you to have your mind changed by reading the articles that begin on page 32.

Lincoln warned in his Second Inaugural that "every drop of blood drawn with the [slavedriver's] lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword," and many of the privates fighting for him lived that as their personal creed, at great cost. For every five slaves freed in the Civil War, one white soldier gave his life; many more suffered maimings, trauma, and financial ruin. Black freedom in this country was emphatically not free; it was bought and paid for by brave warriors.

The thing to keep in mind is that whether they were Northerners fighting the wickedness of slavery or defending the unity of their nation, or Southerners protecting their homes and their concept of a distinctive culture, the central characters in this

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battle were idealists. "Ours is a nation that fought the bloodiest war imaginable with *itself* over matters of principle," remarks my friend Frederick Turner. That, clearly, is the root of much of our continuing fascination with this terrible wonder of a war.

When necessary, America will wage total war—adding economic tactics and psychological pressure to military ferocity.

The moral passions that underlay the Civil War still compel modern observers. Dennis Frye, a Civil War re-enactor and amateur historian who organized thousands of fellow re-enactors to fill the battlefield scenes in *Gods and Generals*, knew how to motivate his compatriots. Today's re-enactors, he notes, are not much drawn by money, or celebrity, or flash. When recruiting them to volunteer as participants in the film, often at considerable personal expense and investment of time, he appealed to what he knew they cherished best: "the most elevated value of the mid-nineteenth century—honor."

Ron Maxwell is a rare filmmaker who set out to make a picture as true and principled as the men it would chronicle. He and Frye agreed that recent movies like *Pearl Harbor* were "abominations" as history. "Their stories reflect modern mythology, in which history is used and abused." As he began filming, Maxwell stated that "the last thing the world needs is a mindless, glossy entertainment on the Civil War."

It was no doubt his scrupulous commitment to authenticity that led Maxwell to refuse the little method-acting request that Robert Duvall describes to *TAE* later in this issue (see John Meroney's interview on page 24). More fundamentally, Maxwell's insistence on historical veracity led him to include racial depictions and dialects, political speeches, and religious scenes that will surely raise howls from today's sensitivity police when this movie opens. Maxwell knows there are people who will not want to go where this chronicle takes them. But he hopes there are some millions of others who will give it a full hearing. "In order to be a commercial success, this film will have to rely on those Americans who truly care about their history, who think hard about where we've been as a nation, and where we're going."

Gods and Generals depended on those very same people to get produced in the first place. Hundreds of amateur re-enactors gave of their time to make the warfighting scenes realistic. That's why the sneak preview of the film was offered not in Hollywood or New York but in Hagerstown, Maryland—to re-enactors gathered to mark the 140th anniversary of the battle of Antietam.

The re-enacting community is one of those fascinating, devoted affinity groups that our nation produces in abundance. There are now hundreds of thousands of Americans who spend their weekends trying to place themselves deeply in the shoes (or bare feet) of those who wrestled with the great issues of the day six generations ago. These tend to be serious, familial, highly intelligent people (see our profiles starting on page 38). They buy and study books on blackpowder weapons, vintage fabrics, and nineteenth-century medicines. They pay custom gunsmiths and wagonmakers large fees for genuine artifacts. One of their number has just published a *Civil War Reenactors' Encyclopedia*.

The multi-page "Rules and Procedures for Re-enactors" I was handed at the 140th Antietam Re-enactment is impressively thorough. Item 34 states that "Uniforms must be of period design or style. Please pay particular attention to footwear." Item 35 goes on to specify: "Modern eyeglasses will not be tolerated on the battlefield. Those needing period eyewear should make the needed arrangements prior to this event." Item 49 stipulates that "No flashlights, tape recorders, or Coleman lanterns are allowed in any civilian or military camp."

There is extensive guidance on horsemanship for cavalry troopers, including a requirement that horses "be trained to gunfire and battle before the event." (How exactly one would accomplish this is a little hard for me to imagine.) Cannons, of which I saw dozens, are all privately owned and maintained, and are fired repeatedly during artillery duels. Women are allowed on the battlefield only if they "keep their hair up at all times" and disguise their gender. One temperate touch: "Any overly aggressive hand-to-hand saber fighting is forbidden." (Can't have some shark lawyer suing after the saber battle.)

You feel you have stepped back two centuries at a re-enactors' gathering. Modern roads are hidden under layers of dirt or mulch. Other chronological anomalies that cannot be removed are obscured with screens. Large temporary bridges are built over streams. One conclave I attended even had five vintage rail cars brought in and set up on a temporary rail bed (extending only as far as the cars), because a rail spur had been part of the original battle. Farmers are paid by organizers to harvest, or not harvest, crops in order to approximate field conditions that prevailed during the actual conflicts. Furniture makers burn the zinc galvanizing off of any modern hardware in order to maintain a fully accurate look for their pieces. Suttlers sell only period-correct snack foods: cream soda, popcorn, salt pork.

There is much fun had, but this is not play. Participants tend to be quite earnest. Manners, language, relations between the sexes, and dress mimic the reserve of earlier times. And when it comes time for fighting, the participants are deadly sober, sometimes even a little grim. They want reasonably true re-creations of battle stress, confusion, opportunities for valor, and so forth. There are always church services connected with the events, and most big weekends end with a Blue and Gray formal ball where the bustles rustle and the buttons shine.

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The people drawn to re-enacting are not only well informed about the physical details of history, they are deeply respectful of the ideas that motivated Americans a century and a half ago. A chiropractor and local re-enactor (122nd Regiment, New York State Volunteers) who lives near me is a perfect example of the species.

Black freedom in this country was bought and paid for by brave warriors. For every five slaves freed, one white soldier gave his life; many more suffered trauma.

Christopher Piering noticed that the headstones of Civil War veterans in a local cemetery were deteriorating into weedy illegibility. So he and his 11-year-old son, plus a few friends, began replacing them. By Veterans' Day of that year, they had 231 new, sparkling white markers arrayed in solemn rows across a rolling hillside of Syracuse's Oakwood Cemetery. "There were 12,265 people who fought in the war from Onondaga County, and those guys gave the best years of their lives looking forward to a future some would never know," says Piering. "We are that future, and it would be criminal to let their final resting places become unmarked."

Asked by the local newspaper what motivated him, Piering quotes words delivered at Gettysburg by Joshua Chamberlain:

"In great deeds something abides.... Forms change and pass; bodies disappear; but spirits linger, to consecrate ground.... And reverent men and women from afar, and generations that know us not...heart-drawn to see where and by whom great things were suffered and done for them, shall come to this deathless field, to ponder and dream; and lo! the shadow of a mighty presence shall wrap them in its bosom, and the power of the vision pass into their souls."

One of the strangest things about our Civil War was its high mix of civility and harshness. As in any war, there were many episodes capable of inspiring bitterness. When Rebel civilian William Mumford tore down the U.S. flag from the mint in New Orleans, occupying Union General Ben Butler had him hanged. About the same time, Confederate Captain Henry Wirz was presiding over the Andersonville prison where Union POWs were so badly cared for that more than 13,000 of the 45,000 locked up there died. At one point during Sherman's march, it was discovered that the Southerners had buried booby-traps to maim his men. The Northern commander ordered his Confederate prisoners to the front.

Everyday struggles in the field were brutal. Yet there was often a strange empathy in this conflict. Friendly relations frequently existed between the outlying pickets of the two armies. Opposing soldiers mingled peacefully at the spots along streams where they drew water for their camps. During the siege of Vicksburg, a soldier named Elisha Stockwell wrote:

> It was two rods from the outside of our fort to the outside of the Rebs' fort. Moonlight nights they used to agree to have a talk, and both sides would get up on the breastworks and blackguard each other and laugh and sing songs for an hour at a time, then get down and commence shooting again.

Another soldier, Thatcher Riis, describes regular meetings where Yanks and Rebs would play cards together or converse. His journal records, "From remarks of some of the Rebels, I judged that their supply of provisions was getting low, and that they had no source from which to draw more. We gave them from our own rations some fat meat, crackers, coffee, and so forth." Officers from opposite camps who had been friends before the war would occasionally dine together, right amidst hostilities.

It startles me to think that Mrs. Jefferson Davis ended her life as a best friend of Mrs. Ulysses S. Grant. When General Grant's body was re-interred in the newly built Grant's Tomb in New York City, guess who was clinging to Mrs. Grant's arm during the ceremony? Mrs. Davis.

This odd blend of ferocity with fraternity has become a distinctive American characteristic. Currently, our Marine Corps is nearly as famous for its "Toys for Tots" program as for its high competence with the rifle. NFL gladiators moonlight visiting cancer patients in hospitals. Contemporary Americans don't nurse grudges after battles end, just as there were remarkably few attempts to gain "revenge" after fighting ceased in the 1860s. The Civil War demonstrated how easily Americans forgive. Northerners and Southerners alike proved mostly gracious, charitable, and humane.

At the same time, the Civil War demonstrated—perhaps paradoxically—how hard we are willing to fight. Fully three quarters of all Southern white males of vaguely military age served in their army at some point. Approximately 620,000 soldiers on both sides were killed over four years—the equivalent of losing 5 *million* of our current population.

The famed charge of the light brigade, immortalized in poetry by Alfred Tennyson as a heroic sacrifice, saw 37 percent of its participants cut down. Yet at Gettysburg (to take just one of many bloody battles) there were an astonishing 23 regiments among the Federals alone which suffered casualties of at least *50* percent. The regiment raised in my home county of Madison in New York lost 307 of its 431 men at Gettysburg—a 71 percent casualty rate. I saw a battle flag at the Museum of the Confederacy in New Orleans that was pierced by bullets 83 different times during the charge up Snodgrass Hill at the battle of Chickamauga. Thirteen different flag bearers from the 2nd Batallion of Hillard's Alabama Legion

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were killed or wounded carrying this flag up the hill, each leaping forward voluntarily to keep it flying. That's just one flag, for one batallion, at one battle.

America is sharply different from other Western countries in its martial spirit. This was demonstrated during our Civil War, and it remains true now. Go to our battlefields and you will be amazed at how devoted, well informed, sober, and reverential everyday Americans are toward their military heroes. We remain committed to our current fighting men, to the memory of the slain, to the patriotic symbols of our land, and to the preservation of our historically unusual freedoms. Our deep respect for duty, honor, and strength of arms, and the continuing readiness of millions of Americans to fight and die rather than take a foreign bit in their mouth makes us very much an exception among nations at our level of development.

The continuing readiness of millions of Americans to fight and die rather than take a foreign bit in their mouth makes us very much an exception among today's developed nations.

I happened to spend September 11, 2002—the first anniversary of the al-Qaeda attacks—on the battlefields around Fredericksburg, Virginia. This is the bloodiest landscape in North America, where four major clashes killed or wounded 100,000 American boys and men. Out in the fields all day with books and maps, I was separated from the yammer of television anchors, and surrounded by the ghosts of many patriots. The battlegrounds are somber places, but not grim; there was too much idealism behind the primal sacrifices offered up there for these to become depressing places. On that emotional day, these battle-scarred acres turned out to be a perfect place to gain some perspective on the realities of sacrifice and recovery.

Robert Toombs was a U.S. senator who became the first Secretary of State of the Confederacy after Georgia seceded from the Union. He was a fiery Southern partisan. But he understood that America's martial spirit would not be defeated by secession papers. In a Rebel cabinet meeting on April 9, 1861, he rose gravely to warn Jefferson Davis and the rest of the Southern leadership against firing on Fort Sumter. "It is suicide, it is murder.... You will wantonly strike a hornet's nest which extends from the mountains to the ocean; and legions, now quiet, will swarm out to sting us to death.... It is unnecessary, it puts us in the wrong. It is fatal."

Toombs' predictions proved perfect. Yet the end result was something he probably could not have dreamed of. For it was the eventual fate of the Confederacy to be *defeated into prosperity* by the United States of America. (The list of opponents elevated by having fallen to the mercies of the USA eventually grew to cover many others, including Germany, Japan, Russia, and now—a work in progress—Afghanistan.)

"There was no time during the rebellion when I did not think, and often say, that the South was more to be benefited by its defeat than the North," wrote President Grant. He explained that the South was "burdened with an institution abhorrent to all civilized people" (not unlike the Germans under Nazism, Russians staggering through communism, or Afghans ruled by the Taliban). The South's slave aristocracy "degraded labor, kept it in ignorance, and enervated the governing class." Skilled workers and entrepreneurs were not being raised up. Whites who took up manual toil were denigrated as "poor white trash." The soil was being exhausted by a feudal agrarian system, and restive slaves were in danger of outnumbering their masters. Grant's conclusion: "The war was expensive to the South as well as to the North, both in blood and treasure, but it was worth all it cost."

Interestingly, that was the eventual conclusion of almost all Southerners as well. They ended up part of the world's richest, most powerful, most self-expressive and free nation, re-knitted into levels of success and harmony that had never before been approached.

At the centennial celebration of West Point in 1902, Edward Alexander, who graduated with the class of 1857 and rose to Brigadier General in the Confederate army, was invited to speak from the standpoint of a CSA veteran. When he accepted, a large contingent of Southern alumni decided to attend as well. Alexander spoke bluntly: "It was best for the South that the cause was lost.... The firm bonds which today hold together this great nation could never have been wrought by debates in Congress." It took a mighty cataclysm.

"The Civil War," concludes Naval War College historian Mackubin Thomas Owens, "was the original Good War, a necessary sacrifice, a noble mutual experience that in the long run solidified the nation." Some wars can do that.

The War Between the States stiffened the template on how America fights. It demonstrated that, when necessary, we will wage total war. This was something new, pioneered by Grant and Sherman, adding economic tactics and psychological pressure to military operations. "We do unto others what they do unto us, only worse," is how Jimmy Hoffa put it.

Yet at the same time, Americans disdain wanton brutality. Fred Turner put his finger on this national complexity in *TAE*'s April/May 2002 issue, where he wrote: "American military prowess comes not from a militaristic society. It comes from a depth of culture and a density of history, from a constant striving for goodness."

Please God, it will always be so.

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Sidelights

In an effort to deglamorize fur, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) is providing fur coats to the poor. A group spokeshuman stated that only the destitute should wear furs. ··· New York City is considering housing the homeless on decommissioned luxury cruise ships. ❧ Berkeley mayor Tom Bates stole and trashed about 1,000 copies of the college paper that endorsed his opponent. ··· As a time-saving measure, Mayor Jay Lee of Virgin, Utah charges residents $25 to speak up at zoning and planning meetings. ❧ A seven-year-old Minneapolis boy stole two cars in 11 days. Children under the age of ten cannot be charged with a crime in Minnesota. ❧ Krowbar, the U.S. Customs Service's most efficient drug-sniffing dog, retired after seven years of working the U.S.-Mexico border. During his career he uncovered more than 30 tons of narcotics valued at over $300 million. At one point a Mexican drug cartel placed a $50,000 contract on the dog. ❧ Sixty-four percent of American men would kill Osama bin Laden personally given the chance, according to a Fox News poll. Only 29 percent of American women would.

Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, leader of the Islamist terror group Hezbollah, is urging a global suicide bombing campaign: "Martyrdom operations—suicide bombings—should be exported outside Palestine...I encourage Palestinians to take suicide bombings worldwide. Don't be shy about it." ❧ Former South African president Nelson Mandela apparently believes U.S. plans to remove Saddam Hussein from power are racist: "What we know is that Israel has weapons of mass destruction.... Why should there be one standard for one country, especially because it is black, and another one for another country, Israel, that is white?" Iraqis, of course, are not considered black. ❧ Around two thirds of Germans are unhappy with the euro, according to a European Commission poll. Germans blame the euro for rising prices and the bad economy. ··· The German capital is currently $60 billion in debt. Berlin's mayor, Social Democrat Klaus Wowereit, expressed hope that the federal government "won't let us starve." ··· An average of 200 protest marches and demonstrations take place in Berlin every month. ❧ There are more than 10,000 Italian soldiers involved in peacekeeping missions around the world, making them the third-largest contingent after the United States and Great Britain. ❧ China is campaigning to prevent Westerners from calling the world's tallest peak "Mount Everest," and instead use its Chinese name, Mount Qomolangma. According to a Chinese newspaper report, "British colonialists raped the sacred mountain of the Tibetans by giving it a false name...the world is still persistently humiliating Mount Qomolangma with English-language hegemonism." ❧ Singapore is considering lifting its ban on chewing gum. The government hopes gum-chewing will help smokers quit their habit.

Israeli police prevented an Arab porn actor from being lynched. He lived in an Arab town within Israel, and his fellow villagers were angered that, by starring in a porn film, he was "harming the honor of Islam." ··· San Francisco strippers went on strike, picketing strip clubs and chanting "Two, four, six, eight, pay me more to gyrate!" ··· An estimated 5 to 6 percent of middle-school girls in Japan are allegedly involved in some form of prostitution. They ply the trade in order to afford trendy items, especially shoes and handbags. ··· Dutch and German scientists believe a birth control pill for men will be available within five years. ❧ The University of Missouri-Columbia is selling official school coffins. Prices range from $1,590 to $2,390. ··· Students at Lindenwood University, Missouri can pay their tuition with any commodity that the school dining hall can put to use. Six students have received scholarships in exchange for pigs. ❧ The U.S. Postal Service is missing $65 million worth of white plastic delivery crates. —*BB*

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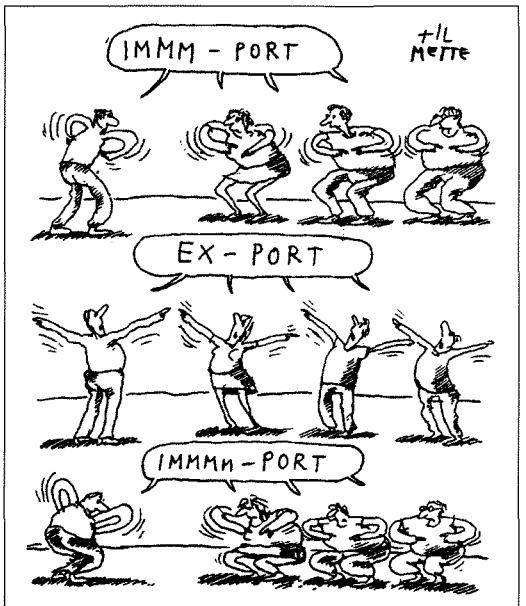

Workout for Economists

STILL BATTLING

In late December, the United States Historical Society dropped a bomb on Richmond, Virginia. It announced plans to erect a statue commemorating Abraham Lincoln's April 5, 1865 visit to the defeated city. The statue, of Lincoln seated on a bench next to his son Tad, would be placed near the National Park Service's Richmond battlefield visitors' center. The design calls for a granite slab bearing the inscription, "To Bind Up the Nation's Wounds"—but instead the idea has ripped the scab off some old ones.

Within roughly two picoseconds of the story appearing in the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, e-mails began flooding the newspaper's offices denouncing the idea. Many compared it to placing a statue of Hitler in Jerusalem or one of Osama bin Laden in Manhattan. Brag Bowling, commander of the Virginia Division of the Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV), called the proposed statue a "government-sponsored and -sanctioned act of insensitivity." (Actually, the U.S. Historical Society is a private, non-profit group.)

Richmond, the former capital of the Confederacy, is never far from a shouting match over its past. The last big uproar occurred in 1999, when city councilman Sa'ad El-Amin demanded and achieved the removal of a mural depicting Robert E. Lee from a canal-walk restoration project by the James River. El-Amin contended that the mural (one of 29 showing scenes and figures from Richmond's history, including Gabriel Prosser, who led a slave insurrection) insulted the sensibilities of African Americans. "If Lee had won, I'd still be a slave," El-Amin said. A different mural of Lee was eventually hung, but only after months of controversy.

Earlier, a months-long battle had raged over whether to place a statue of black tennis great Arthur Ashe on Monument Avenue, which boasts famous memorials to Lee, Stonewall Jackson, and other Civil War notables. There have also been dust-ups over gubernatorial proclamations of Confederate History Month, the renaming of city bridges, Confederate-insignia vanity license plates, and more.

It could hardly be otherwise in Richmond, which has both a majority-black population and a large number of residents whose ancestors fought for the Confederacy. Strangely, both the NAACP and the SCV lay claim to the mantle of victimhood: the NAACP because of slavery, and the SCV both because the South lost and because all Southern war heroes are now tarred, rightly or not, as slavedrivers.

For many blacks, slavery is the most important fact about the South. For many descendants of Confederate ancestors who never owned slaves, slavery is a side issue. Each camp insists on holding fast to its own heritage while downplaying the importance of the other. Confederate partisans are fond of recalling Lee's behavior in St. Paul's church, when a scandalized congregation stood frozen because a black man had approached the altar. Lee rose and knelt beside him. It was a graceful act one might wish had been matched more often since.

—**Bart Hinkle** *is a columnist at the* Richmond Times-Dispatch.

WHAT IS QATAR?

As America prepares for war in Iraq, we have been hearing more about the tiny Arab emirate of Qatar. Home to several thousand U.S. troops, the largest stash of pre-positioned American military gear in the region, and a new alternate headquarters for our forces in the Middle East, Qatar has become our key ally in the Persian Gulf. Despite some initial hesitance, Qatar now seems supportive of a war against Iraq. But how reliable is our new friend?

A traditional monarchy run by an emir, Qatar has been independent since 1971. It was long allied closely with Saudi Arabia, which it borders. Roughly 4,400 square miles in area, it has a population of approximately 600,000—of which only a quarter are actually Qatari, the remainder being predominantly Pakistanis, Indians, other Arabs, and Iranians.

Oil fires its economy. Recently, tremendous natural gas reserves have been discovered under its territorial waters. Qatar has used its natural riches to jump rapidly into the twenty-first century, modernizing its society, building up a

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physical structure, diversifying its economy with a push into technology, and becoming a regional meeting and leisure center.

While the Qataris are Arabs from the same ultra-strict Wahabi sect as the Saudis, the current ruler is much more open and Westernized. Since the 1995 bloodless inter-family coup that brought the present emir to the throne, Qatar has been liberalizing and moving closer to the U.S. And military relations have mushroomed.

Legislators on the national advisory council are still appointed by the ruling family, but in 1999 the first-ever elections were held for a municipal council. Women have the right to vote. And press censorship has been relaxed. The relatively independent Arab language news channel al-Jazeera operates from Qatar, and is followed closely throughout the Middle East. The network includes some critical reporting on other Arab states, especially Saudi Arabia, which some neighboring governments do not appreciate.

Qatar has managed to establish solid relations with Israel, Iran, and Iraq, making it a useful touchpoint for the region. Qatar's relative political openness, independence, and strong support for the U.S., however, have alienated Saudi Arabia, which now appears to be working to undermine the nation's ruler. The Saudis have reportedly supported two coup attempts against the current sheikh. The Qatari government arrested "scores" of high-ranking army officers—including some members of the ruling family—after an October 2002 plot was exposed. There were claims that U.S. troops, some in plainclothes, participated in the arrests.

It was primarily Pakistani and Yemeni soldiers in the Qatari army who were arrested. A major source of concern for the regime is the fact that about half of the army consists of foreign nationals.

While outside pot-stirring can't be proven, informed observers believe there are active efforts under way to turn Qatar's foreign policy toward Islamic causes, or at least to isolate the nation from the rest of the Arab world. Qataris hope to preserve their present position as an oasis of relative freedom, independence, and prosperity in an otherwise parched corner of the world. But in the face of Saudi, Iranian, Iraqi, or al-Qaeda undermining, they need America's friendship and military support as much as we need theirs. Maybe even more.

—**Paul Crespo,** *a former Marine Corps officer, served as defense attaché liason at the U.S. embassy in Qatar.*

WORK AVAILABLE

In the epilogue to her recent book An Unlikely Conservative, *Linda Chavez describes a corner of American politics in deep need of a cleansing reform. Is anyone in the new Republican Congress looking for a project?*

Something needs to be done to rein in the enormous—and growing—political power of the labor unions. Unions represent only about 12 percent of the American work force, but they virtually control the Democratic Party and play an enormous role in American politics.

Funded by mandatory dues from workers, who in many instances must join a union under the terms of their employment, unions are the single largest source of political contributions in the nation—much of it hidden. In the 2000 elections, unions raised and spent $75 million in direct contributions, but they are estimated to have spent as much as $800 million if one factors in the amount devoted to publications endorsing candidates or legislation, staff time "volunteered" to campaigns, get-out-the-vote drives, and other expenditures largely hidden from public scrutiny and reporting. Some of these activities are illegal.

When I was publications editor at the American Federation of Teachers union, it was routine for the AFT to publish campaign literature on behalf of candidates. Although it was legal to distribute such material to union members, we often printed hundreds of thousands of extra copies to give to candidates to distribute to the general public, which was not allowed under the law. I once personally delivered several boxes of union-printed campaign leaflets to Ted Kennedy's presidential campaign headquarters in 1980. And I witnessed phone banks set up in union headquarters, staffed by paid employees acting as "volunteers," making calls to the general public on behalf of candidates—which constituted a substantial contribution outside the legal limits of campaign finance law.

What the AFT did was nothing out of the ordinary. Many unions engage in similar activity. In return for huge union contributions in staff, time, and money, unions often call the shots in the Democratic Party. The Associated Press reported that "in exchange for extensive financial support, Democratic Party officials let union leaders approve or veto election strategies in statewide campaigns" in 1996. Yet when a Federal Elections Commission investigation unearthed documents revealing the extent of ties between the unions and the Democratic Party, the unions sought a court injunction to conceal the information from the public, arguing that it constituted "proprietary information."

The organization SUPA (Stop Union Political Abuse) has drafted federal legislation that would prevent unions from collecting money for anything other than collective bargaining and contract administration—unless they do so entirely through

AND YOU THOUGHT PEROT WAS ODD...

Montana's recent Libertarian Party candidate for Senate has turned blue. Literally. Stan Jones said he started ingesting a colloidal silver solution he believed would protect him from disease back in 1999, when he feared that Y2K disruptions might lead to a shortage of antibiotics. He does not take the supplement any longer, but his skin condition, called argyria, is permanent.

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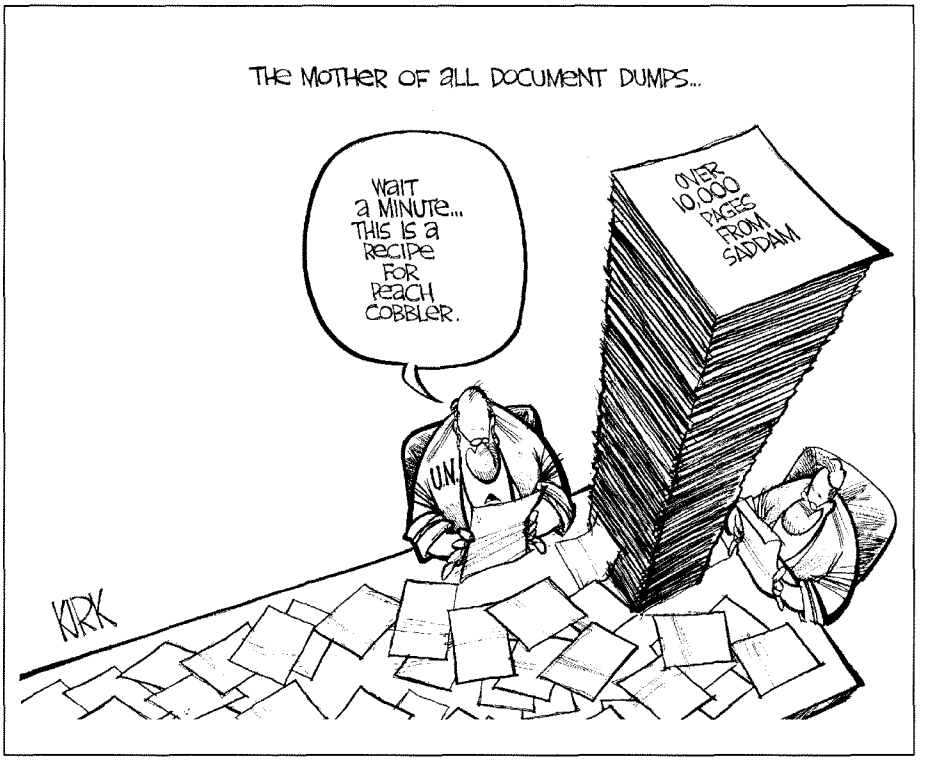
voluntary donations. In January 2002, Representative Tom Tancredo, a Republican from Colorado, introduced H.R. 3632, the Workers' Freedom of Choice Act. Passage of this legislation would have more impact on cleaning up campaign abuses than any amount of "campaign finance reform," which restricts individual citizens' voluntary contributions while doing almost nothing to control unions' use of coerced union dues for political purposes, whether members endorse the causes or not.

Although about 40 percent of union members vote for Republican candidates for federal offices, nearly 98 percent of union contributions go to Democratic candidates or the Democratic Party directly, and much of this money comes from union dues. Unions are the only institution that uses involuntary funds for political purposes with impunity—and on a scale that has a corrupting influence on American politics. Will somebody do something about this?

TOUGH (GUY) LOVE

Not many of us would have the heroic composure to do what Senate majority leader (and physician) Bill Frist did at the scene of a bloody accident in Florida earlier this year. An SUV had rolled over several times after a tire blowout, and there were six badly hurt people requiring medical assistance. Frist, who happened to be driving by with his sons, swooped in to get the injured people on life support quickly. He helped paramedics with the tricky job of getting a tracheal tube in place in one of the women who had suffered much trauma to her face and neck.

According to one of the emergency workers who responded to the accident, the most important thing Frist did at the site of the crash was triage. That's a polite word for the tough but necessary concept of sorting people out in order of priority. If you only have so much time and so many resources, you'd better deal with the most critical cases first. Set aside those with less serious injuries, and those who have no chance of surviving. You'll come back to them later if you can.



"He actually pulled me away from one patient to render care to another patient, who he correctly identified as being more critical," the captain of Broward County Fire Rescue explained of Frist's contribution. It takes a certain hardness of heart to abandon a person who's hurting to go care for someone else, but logically it is the only sensible course. It saved lives in this case.

With this episode in mind, consider the other set of news stories about Bill Frist that circulated around the same time he was selected Senate majority leader. These articles painted Frist as unfeeling and harsh because, as an eager medical student, he stopped by humane societies and fibbed to get his hands on homeless cats so he could dissect them. He adopted them under false pretenses because the labs had run out of animals to use in his clinical research. (Frist ultimately became a famous heart and lung transplant surgeon.)

Frist kept the cats as pets for a few days before operating on them. In his mind, this was a necessary step to save human lives. For all the criticism, his behavior was not far from the medically accepted concept of triage: turning your healing attention away from one party and to another whom you deem needier or likelier to profit from your efforts.

As an utter softie toward animals, I could never do what Bill Frist did to the stray cats he "adopted." But then, I could also never do what Bill Frist did at the scene of the Florida accident. Surrounded by people wracked with pain, I could not bring myself to choose who would get treatment and relief first. I would not be able to tear a paramedic away from someone with injuries, even if I knew there was someone else even more badly off. And in such a way, I would cost people's lives where Bill Frist saved them.

The truth is that real heroes—those with the strength, courage, and ability to solve major crises—must possess a certain steeliness that allows them to function amidst horror and choose the better of different bad outcomes. A normal man would shrink from making such choices, and the result would be bad.

Bill Frist may be a hardened cat-killer. But in a man charged with helping lead the most powerful country in the world through stormy waters, this

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hardness may sometimes prove useful, even compassionate.

—**Marni Soupcoff** *is a regular contributor to TAEmag.com.*

DECONSTRUCTING NYC

The proposals for the World Trade Center site unveiled recently by some of the world's leading architects reveal a curious state of affairs: The architecture profession's avant-garde is hopelessly mired in a failed past.

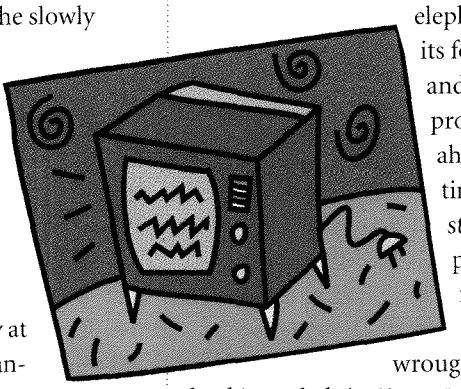
Almost all of the new proposals come out of the fashionable design movement known as "deconstruction." As implied by its name, this style aims to break down established forms into jagged, unbalanced fragments. It makes broad political claims derived from trendy French philosophy, centering on the notion that the universe is nothing more than a collection of parts. Therefore disassembly, or deconstruction, of existing institutions, ideas, and traditions is essential to solving today's problems.

Almost any scientist can tell you that this premise rests on the sheerest nonsense. If science has revealed anything in the last century, it is that the universe is a system, in which wholes are greater than the sum of their parts. Physical, chemical, biological, and ecological systems cannot possibly be understood as mere collections of fragments. There are interactive "field" effects that are critical to keeping physical structures, organisms, even cities, functioning. Life is best envisioned as a sequence of patterns, in which components merge to create new entities on a larger scale. This is repeated from the scale of atoms up to that of organisms, right into full-blown societies and ecosystems. The rich complexity of life emerges from millions of minute, complex, decentralized adaptations.

Applied to cities, the point is that urban zones are not mechanical collections of abstract forms. They are living fabrics that evolve over time. Such places work best, as Jane Jacobs taught us, when there is no tyrannical string-puller, when they, instead, grow in an almost biological process. An intelligent design philosophy must respect history and nature, and incorporate the slow, adaptive processes that brought them into being.

Alas, the "decons" get all the important details wrong. They impose the early twentieth century's simple industrial forms—the old "machine aesthetic"—now twisted and morphed at a grotesque scale. Instead of the two tyrannical aluminum towers of the World Trade Center, our last modernist bungle, they would impose massive jumbles of elementary crystalline forms.

This inhuman style ignores humanity's inherited tendency to seek evolved, history-based structures. Academics and the trendy media may be urging the designers to erect monstrous abstractions, but these only damage the type of urban fabric that real humans actually enjoy living in. In place of the slowly adaptive richness of the human city, the decons want to impose metallic confections that represent a new kind of geometrical fundamentalism.



But for the decons and their followers, there is an important political ideology at stake. Since for them all meaning is merely "socially constructed," any construction is as valid as any other, and echoing earlier styles would only "privilege earlier elites." That's why anything with the slightest whiff of "tradition" or "history" must be rejected as too "reactionary" and bourgeois.

But, of course, what are the decons themselves, if not self-appointed "elites"? This is no less than a power grab—a hypocritcal one—disguised as "liberation."

The decision about the Twin Towers' replacement will have enormous consequences for the shaping of our cities in the future. For modern deconstructionists, the enduring values of tradition, historical continuity, and commemoration of American democratic ideals—all the things we should be rebuilding in our severely damaged world, all the things one would hope a 9/11 monument would embody—are things to be avoided or even attacked.

Will everyday Americans follow them down this path, betraying both our country's past and its future?

—**Michael Mehaffy,** *a Portland, Oregon urban designer, and* **Nikos Salingaros,** *a mathematician at the University of Texas at San Antonio, are editors at* Katarxis, *a journal of new science and architecture.*

LIFE'S TOO SHORT FOR TV

Two years ago, back when I worked in television, I got a chance to serve as a judge for TV's Emmy awards. I was an ABC news staffer, and helped judge the news category. I voted for things like a *National Geographic* story about an elephant that got its foot blown off and needed a prosthetic, an ahead-of-its-time *60 Minutes* story on smallpox risks, CNN footage of the carnage wrought by limb-hacking rebels in Sierra Leone, and an ABC piece on asthma.

I dealt harshly with goofy items such as a *Dateline* story about a dentist who brutally manhandled his child patients, though the piece contained such entertaining and memorable lines as: "But Debbie found there were no clowns or magic shows at this office—only a dentist who didn't care about children or their parents."

How did my favorites fare when the Emmys were finally announced? I'll confess: I didn't even own a television any more by the time the awards were aired. In an astonishing coincidence, my television broke about two weeks after I

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left ABC News—I swear I didn't throw anything at it—and as the days passed it slowly dawned on me that I didn't need a television at all.

For six months after leaving ABC, I worked as a freelance writer, with neither TV-viewing nor TV-producing to give my life its usual punch-clock rhythms. Oh, it was scary at times. What if I wrote a column for some political magazine, I thought, and people figured out that I can't get Fox News or that I haven't seen *Meet the Press*? What if *X-Files* got good again and I missed it?

But I got over it, and those turned out to be six good months. I read classics of literature. I wrote book reviews. I dated an opera singer. I spent more time with friends. I learned that real life is far richer, more informative, and more entertaining than television, if you work at it a little.

I feel freer today. The television will not be replaced—life is too short.

—**Todd Seavey,** *a Phillips Foundation fellow, edits* HealthFactsAndFears.com.

MS. FORTUNE

Two liberal feminists have discovered that…capitalism works!

In their new book, *Kitchen Table Entrepreneurs*, Martha Shirk and Anna Wadia tell the stories of 11 women who started their own small businesses and pulled their families out of poverty. The authors acknowledge that owning a business has always been part of the American Dream, and aim to encourage it among low-income women.

Though several of these women fled welfare to start their companies, the authors inexplicably insist that greater welfare benefits are necessary to promote small business growth. Even more puzzling is their recommendation that today's system of channeling welfare recipients into jobs be changed to a system of channeling them toward "training programs" and education instead. They argue this will give people the skills they need to get better jobs and make more money.

But one of their own profilees demonstrates the pattern that has generally worked better in real life. Ollie Barkley, owner of Ollie's Mountaineer Knits, says she became more productive the more she knitted. Her job *was* job training. Ollie also taught her husband Rick how to knit, which increased their income further. Without her husband by her side, Ollie would not have been able to home school her children in addition to working a job, much less start her own business. It's a glaring omission that the authors don't acknowledge these benefits of marriage.

Shirk and Wadia offer other policy prescriptions on welfare reform that follow the party line laid down by the National Organization for Women as well as the Ms. Foundation. They refuse to recognize the merits of work-based welfare and marriage despite the fact that the experiences of real-life women they chronicle in their own book say something very different.

—**Rachel Jurado** *is a* TAE *intern.*

PRODUCTIVITY MIRACLE?

When new machines, new information, or new techniques allow workers to produce more in the same period of time, this is what economists call "productivity growth." Producing more with less is the only lasting way to improve our standard of living. And it's something we've recently been doing extraordinarily well.

"Since the business cycle peaked in 2001, productivity has risen at an annualized rate of 3.8 percent," announced Secretary of Labor Elaine Chao at the American Enterprise Institute not long ago. That is higher than the already-strong 2.5 percent rate of 1995-2000, and far exceeds the 1.4 percent annual rate achieved from 1973 to 1995. For more than seven years, American productivity has been zooming, and Federal Reserve chairman Alan Greenspan predicts that strong growth may continue for years to come.

This is very good news for Americans. If workers are able to put out more goods and services per hour of work, then employers can afford to pay them better. And because it lowers costs, higher productivity makes purchases more affordable to consumers. There are other benefits as well. Kathleen Utgoff, head of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, estimates that one extra percent of annual increase in productivity will reduce the federal deficit by $2 trillion over 10 years—and cut our Social Security shortfall by up to half.

There are many theories on why productivity is surging even during the current period of modest economic growth. Many economists believe recent advances in computing and communications technology are responsible. Greenspan and others say corporate fat-cutting and reorganization have helped. Deregulation and wiser tax policy have contributed. Glenn Hubbard, chairman of the White House Council of Economic Advisers, found that the 2001 tax cuts alone increased productivity growth by 0.2 percent.

Improved health among American workers is also a factor. Professor Frank Lichtenberg of Columbia University notes that new pharmaceuticals have increased lifespans and ability to work, while decreasing illness and need for hospitalization. He estimates that new drugs approved just between 1983 and 1996 reduced the number of Americans unable to work by 1.4 million, thus increasing wages by $43.3 billion per year. Lichtenberg also estimates that these drugs cut sick days by 99 million per year, saving $10 billion annually.

On the other hand, increased security demands since the 9/11 attacks have diminished U.S. efficiency somewhat. The key to U.S. prosperity will be to make sure the pluses outweigh the minuses in our future.

—**Leslie Carbone** *has just completed her book* Slaying Leviathan: The Moral Case for Tax Reform.

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Grover Norquist

The GOP Lock

On November 4, 1952, the Republican Party elected a President and captured both the House of Representatives and the Senate. This period of united Republican government lasted only until 1954, when the GOP lost both the House and Senate.

Those were the last years the GOP had extended control of our national government—until the November 2002 election. This time, however, the Republicans have gained control of the House and Senate not for two years, but for at least a decade.

Over the next ten years, all of Congress is likely to remain in GOP hands. In fact, both houses will become more Republican and more conservative. Five separate factors will push in that direction.

First, the most recent round of redistricting solidifies Republicans. We now know the shape, size, and political complexion of most of the 435 House districts, and they will remain unchanged until the 2012 election. Most Congressional seats are redistricted to protect incumbents; competitive races rarely take place. In 2002, only seven incumbents lost elections. Fully 360 House members won 55 percent of the vote or more—a walkaway. In races where the winner merely eked out a victory, Republicans won 11 times and Democrats 18.

The remaining changes in Congressional districts promise additional benefit to the GOP. There are three states that had districts imposed on them by a court (because the parties could not agree on boundaries) which now have one-party control of the governor's mansion and state legislature. As a result, Texas, New Mexico, and Oklahoma will now be redistricted to partisan advantage. The latter two are Democrat-controlled. But Texas, now all-GOP, is vastly more populous.

Texas has 32 House seats—currently 15 Republicans and 17 Democrats. After the map is redrawn the Lone Star state may end up with 20 Republicans and 12 Democrats. New Mexico, which has three seats, and Oklahoma, which has five, will try to shift in the other direction, but they will be able to squeeze out two or three new Democratic seats only if the state governments want to tangle with Republican senators.

The second factor favoring Republicans is that, unlike in 1952 or 1980, the 280 Republican members of the House and Senate weren't ushered in as part of some unusual partisan landslide. Following on GOP landslides in 1954, 1982, and 1994, weak members that won simply by riding on their party's coattails were culled from the herd in subsequent elections. There are no remaining weak Republicans.

Third, as senior Democrats retire from Congress over the coming years, many of their districts will flip to a Republican, regardless of who runs. The GOP stands to gain seven seats this way. Their counterparts, Republicans hanging on to Democratic seats, have been winnowed down over the years to the point where Jim Leach of Iowa is now the only Republican holding down a seat in an obvious Democratic district.

Fourth, the Republican majority promises to become more conservative, as previous-generation Republicans who vote more to the left gradually retire and are replaced by younger GOP members more in keeping with their conservative districts. New York's Sherwood Boehlert, Michigan's Fred Upton, and Maryland's Wayne Gilchrist, for example, would actually do better in elections if they voted more conservatively. Their eventual replacements will. Most "moderate" Democratic members of Congress are liberals who live in conservative districts. Most "moderate" Republicans, on the other hand, cast votes based on their own worldview—not their district's.

Fifth, the very nature of the Senate will help the GOP in the years ahead. In the very close Bush/Gore race of 2000, George W. Bush carried 30 states and Al Gore carried 20. Over time, therefore, one would expect the Senate to have roughly 60 Republicans and 40 Democrats. It's an anomaly that, today, four Democrats represent Republican-majority North and South Dakota. Republicans hold the governor's mansion and legislature in Florida, but the state still sends two Democrats to the Senate. How long can Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina continue to send Democratic senators to Washington?

With Republican control of Congress assured, and President Bush likely to run the executive branch for another six years, many of the fiercest political battles in the years ahead will be fought over something different altogether: over control of the federal judiciary—our least democratic branch of government.

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"Live" with TAE

Who better to write an angry new book called The Case Against Lawyers *than a former prosecutor, civil litigator, and state judge—who is now an anchor for Court TV?*

Catherine Crier

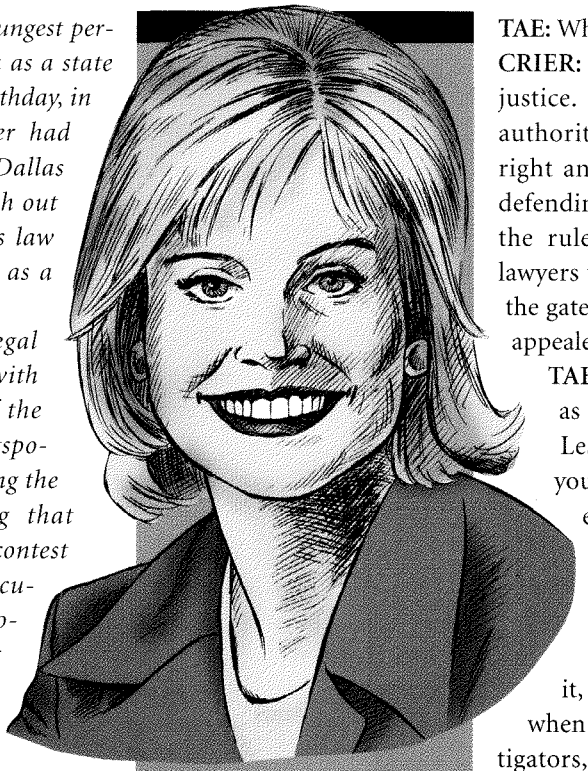
Catherine Crier still ranks as the youngest person in Texas history to win election as a state judge. "I was voted in on my 30th birthday, in 1984," she says. Before that, Crier had worked as a prosecutor in the Dallas County district attorney's office, fresh out of Southern Methodist University's law school. She also had a brief career as a civil litigator.

Her years of observing the legal profession up close have left Crier with a less-than-noble view of many of the law's practitioners. She was an outspoken critic of legalistic evasions during the Clinton administration, warning that "the rule of law is not a popularity contest where the most likable, most articulate, or even the most repentant violator wins. And a sworn oath is not contingent upon the subject under discussion."

During the mid 1980s, Crier made a television audition tape at the urging of some friends. CNN hired her, and she proved popular, hosting "The World Today," "Inside Politics," and her own interview program, "Crier & Company." Later, she moved to ABC where she appeared on "20/20" for three years and also substituted for Ted Koppel and Peter Jennings. She helped launch the Fox News Channel in 1996. And since 1999 Crier has hosted "Catherine Crier Live," a daily news and interview program on Court TV.

Having grown up in Texas riding and showing horses, Crier now lives on 31 acres in Westchester, New York and still considers herself an equestrian.

TAE *associate editor John Meroney interviewed her for* The American Enterprise.



The Founders believed the rule of law could defeat tyranny. Lawyers were supposed to be the guardians at the gate.

TAE: What attracted you to the law?

CRIER: Mainly, it was the notion of pursuing justice. To me, being a lawyer meant using authority and power to uphold what was right and just. I looked at the profession as defending democracy. The Founders believed the rule of law could defeat tyranny, and lawyers were supposed to be the guardians at the gate. The ideals of the profession certainly appealed to me.

TAE: Your first job out of law school was as an assistant district attorney in Dallas. Less than 24 hours after getting a desk, you had to try a jury case. What did that experience teach you?

CRIER: Being a prosecutor is always trial by fire, and that was especially the case in Texas. Everyone had to walk those coals, and if he couldn't cut it, he was out of a job. I'd just turned 23 when I was hired, and here I was with investigators, police officers, and the power of the state behind me. In Texas. Heady stuff. Prosecutors down there can strut while they're sitting down.

TAE: Why did you give up your private law practice to run for judge?

CRIER: Moral outrage. One day, I went to court to put certain information on the record before a judge who'd been on the bench for 22 years. He looked down and told me to talk to the court reporter, and then left the courtroom. He wandered back 30 minutes later, and signed the papers without even hearing what I'd said.

I was furious he was so nonchalant about a serious legal proceeding. So I said to myself, I'm going to run for the bench.

TAE: Given your complaints about the state of the legal profession, how would you advise

Illustration by Sam Torode

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someone who wants to go to law school?

CRIER: Even though I'm a critic, I'd recommend it. We need good lawyers. What law schools ought to do is create graduates who will work to protect the system rather than try to tear it down.

TAE: Over the last several decades, a school of thought that says, "I'm not really responsible for my own conduct" seems to have taken hold in our culture. Why has this view also gained currency in the courts?

CRIER: Mainly because of the shift in psychiatry. Years ago, the psychiatric profession began moving away from holding people responsible for their own actions and instead said that conduct could be excused because of something that may or may not have happened in a person's childhood.

That's been very powerful in influencing civil and criminal courts. It's been accepted as science. Pushing liability for your own conduct onto someone else has become the standard legal tactic.

TAE: Isn't the law supposed to hold people accountable for their actions?

CRIER: It's supposed to be the foundation of the social contract. When I was working on "20/20," I covered a story about a young black woman who had used post-traumatic stress disorder as her defense against murder charges. She killed a girl while trying to steal her leather coat. There wasn't any question that the defendant's life had been traumatic. She'd been abused, raped, and surrounded by physical and emotional violence since childhood. She'd probably seen as much torture and degradation as battle veterans.

But did that justify the execution of another child who refused to relinquish her coat?

TAE: In your book, you describe the Senate as cowardly for the way it conducted President Clinton's impeachment trial.

CRIER: If the Senate had proceeded with a real trial, it certainly would have been more courageous than what they did—which was refusing to label the President's conduct for what it was. That trial simply mirrored the view on personal responsibility that we're talking about.

TAE: Richard Nixon and Bill Clinton are the two presidents who've been in the messiest scandals of the last 30 years. What does it say that they're both lawyers?

CRIER: For one, it's a testament to the fact that lawyers know how to make lots of convoluted arguments to get out of things. Whether someone is arguing that it's not breaking the law if the President does it, or he's saying that the answer depends on what the meaning of "is" is, or he answers, "I did it because I was beaten as a child," it's still wrong. And the more laws we have, the easier it is to find a way out. The fewer the laws, the more likely we are to have a just resolution without all this squirming around.

TAE: Over the last few years, the alternative dispute resolution—mediation—has become popular in civil cases, supplanting the jury trial in places. Do you like it?

CRIER: Absolutely. When I was on the bench, it was amazing how many cases could be settled through basic communication. We started sending out notices to the parties instructing them to come down to the courthouse conference room and talk. We told them that the judges would be around to facilitate, and if they didn't settle, that was fine. But just the act of sitting down and communicating about what each party really wanted rather than staring at a bunch of legal jargon spread over 75 pages of a petition caused many to resolve their problems.

TAE: You've said that in the wake of the September 11 terrorist attacks, politicians who've never been supportive of tort reform suddenly rallied to protect their favorite corporations from lawsuits.

CRIER: Both senators from New York, Chuck Schumer and Hillary Clinton, pushed for legislation to protect the leaseholder of the World Trade Center, the City of New York, the Port Authority, airport operators, and the aircraft manufacturers from lawsuits that could have been devastating. Yet in other circumstances, those two senators would scream if anyone tried to limit lawsuits.

TAE: Democrats generally resist tort reform because trial lawyers are among their biggest contributors.

CRIER: The ability to write and manipulate law is the real currency in elected politics. So, contrary to their usual positions, Schumer and

There are toll-free telephone numbers advertised on television asking whether you've ever been exposed to asbestos—not whether you're actually sick. That's absolutely ludicrous.

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Clinton went to companies and said, "What can we do to help you?" They went to airlines and said "How much money do you want?" Senator Patty Murray—a good Democrat—was ready to bail out Boeing because it's in her backyard.

TAE: One of President Bush's biggest speech topics during the recent midterm elections was about the necessity for tort reform. Obviously the White House believes that this is a message that resonates with the public.

CRIER: I'm surprised the White House didn't make it a larger issue earlier in the campaign. People understand how excessive lawsuits are changing their lives. They understand that litigation is a drain on the economy as well as society.

TAE: Provost & Umphrey, a Texas law firm, was recently fined $500,000 for shopping for the most favorable judge in asbestos lawsuits. Apparently, the firm filed four nearly identical lawsuits in four different courts.

CRIER: I'm *shocked!* There's gambling in this joint!

TAE: Recently, the American Tort Reform Association generated headlines with a study about parts of the country where trial lawyers have unusual advantages because the law seems not to be applied evenhandedly.

CRIER: Mississippi's 22nd Judicial District is infamous. There are advertisements down there telling prospective businesses, "Don't move to Mississippi." In any class-action suit, all a lawyer has to do is go into a community and find one person to represent, and then the suit can be filed there.

Once upon a time, class-action lawsuits were simply efficient mechanisms for trying cases with many parties. Instead of 50 separate cases, there was one big one where everyone had suffered the same damages. Now, it's not that way at all. In the asbestos suits, there are claimants who have *no* symptoms of illness, and they're getting recoveries. Lawyers are now filing suits to recover for *potential* injuries. There are toll-free telephone numbers advertised on television asking whether you've ever been exposed to asbestos—not whether you're actually sick. That's absolutely ludicrous.

TAE: Scores of companies—from wineries, to toaster-makers, to Sears, even the publisher of the *Wall Street Journal*—have been targets of asbestos lawsuits even though they never manufactured asbestos.

CRIER: Sure. Companies that bought a company that somewhere in a subsidiary line may have had an asbestos facility are being tapped for revenue. This is akin to the lead paint cases. Most places stopped using lead paint in the late 1950s. The government didn't even ban it until 1978, but suits have nevertheless been brought against businesses that voluntarily quit using it. The tort bar is going after businesses in an unreasonable way.

TAE: Lawyers now actually do market research to uncover lucrative arguments. A kind of cottage industry—Litigation, Inc.—has developed.

CRIER: For the most part, the law has become another business. I'm concerned when, instead of waiting for a client to walk in the office with a problem, a lawyer puts up a Web site telling people that toothbrush abrasion is a major problem, and that he's trying to put together a class action to sue every toothbrush manufacturer in the United States.

TAE: A lawyer in North Carolina once told me that the best way for someone finishing law school to find the true meaning of the practice of law was to move to a small town and put up his own shingle. He said the definition of being a lawyer is helping people with wills, real estate closings, divorces, and other matters.

CRIER: That's right. You were called a counselor for a reason. Lawyers weren't gladiators. They were counselors.

TAE: Enron was one of the most prominent corporations in your home state. Do you think it was fair that the Bush administration took such a beating from the media when Enron went bust?

CRIER: Those who argued it was merely a Republican scandal ought to go back and track Enron's behavior when Bill Clinton was President. The story of Enron is the story of the law being for sale. Enron put money down on both sides of the political aisle to make sure they were exempt from scrutiny.

TAE: Does the fact that a corporation hires lawyers to help it navigate government regulations and bureaucracy really surprise you?

CRIER: Enron's fall—or WorldCom's—are

I'm concerned when a lawyer puts up a Web site stating that toothbrush abrasion is a major problem, and that he's building a class action suit to sue every toothbrush manufacturer in the U.S.

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scandals about the state of the law in America. They demonstrate that what we now have in this country is a government that passes laws designed for contributors and their lawyer lobbyists.

TAE: Do you ever regret giving up the law in order to go into broadcasting?

CRIER: I haven't given up the law—I've just shifted to a different forum. Sure, there are times I miss the substance that comes with practicing and being on the bench. In a trial, I could cross-examine a witness for three days. On television, I'm supposed to cover meaningful topics in three and a half minutes.

TAE: Before Court TV, you worked at the Fox News Channel. The Fox News slogan is that it's "fair and balanced," but many regard it as conservative.

CRIER: Fox is definitely more conservative than the others in terms of the kinds of stories it puts on the air. In general, I think Fox has done a very good job of bringing on the other side and letting them have their say.

TAE: You've also worked at CNN. What's the biggest difference between the cultures of CNN and Fox?

CRIER: After Fox News emerged, there began to be more political back and forth on general news stories at CNN. Now CNN is really trying to get more people to express opinions across a broad range.

TAE: What kind of boss is Ted Turner?

CRIER: I love people who say what they think, and I always felt that when I asked Ted a question he gave me an honest answer.

TAE: There is a debate going about whether jury deliberations should be televised. In general, do you believe that cameras in the courtroom are good for the law?

CRIER: Yes. Those who are against cameras in the courtroom are mainly against it because of what happened during O. J. Simpson's trial. Yet we try thousands of cases every year on Court TV, and they're not events.

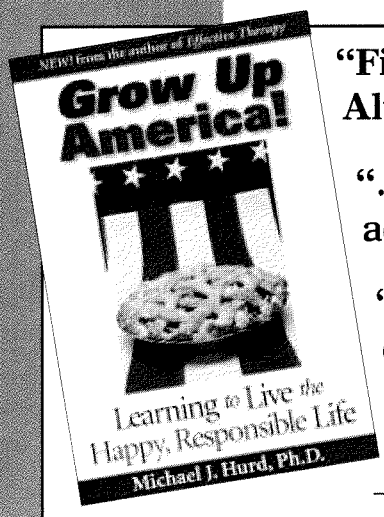
When David Westerfield was on trial for kidnapping and killing Danielle Van Dam in 2002, we carried the case. The ratings were enormous, but no one was jumping up and down in front of the courthouse, and people weren't acting like idiots in the courtroom.

On the other hand, look at the Sean "Puffy" Combs gun and bribery case in 2001: There were no cameras for his trial, and it was an absolute zoo. How a trial plays out in terms of the public has to do with the character of the defendant and how much of a show the judge allows the attorneys to put on when they stand on the courthouse steps. In the O. J. trial, there was sex, drugs, murder, and race—it was soap opera.

TAE: Even when the Supreme Court heard the 2000 Presidential election case, the justices allowed audio from the oral arguments to be broadcast.

CRIER: Yes, and Court TV ran those tapes on air. I thought it was brilliant and breathtaking, like the old days of radio. But then again, I can watch paint dry.

People understand how excessive lawsuits are changing their lives. They understand that litigation is a drain on the economy as well as society.



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The Civil War Returns

By Bill Kauffman

The struggle that forged America and launched modern warfare comes to life in a major new film

A post-battle scene from *Gods and Generals*.

Warner Bros. Pictures/Van Redin

Mr. Lincoln said he liked his speeches short and sweet, so here it is: The new Warner Brothers picture *Gods and Generals* is not only the finest movie ever made about the Civil War, it is also the best American historical film. Period.

Writer-director Ron Maxwell's prequel to his epic *Gettysburg* (1993) is so free of cant, of false notes, of the politically conformist genuflections that we expect in our historical movies, that one watches it as if in a trance, wondering if he hasn't stumbled into a movie theater in an alternative America wherein talented independents like Maxwell get $80 million from Ted Turner to make complex and beautiful films about what Gore Vidal has called "the great single tragic event that continues to give resonance to our Republic."

I watched *Gods and Generals* with a jackhammer headache coming off a sleepless night plus half a day wandering through suburban Charlotte, North Carolina, hardly a den of wonderment and charm. Not ideal conditions for sitting down to a three-hour-and-45-minute movie, yet Maxwell's magnum opus bowled me over. Beside *Gods and Generals*, such previous treatments of the War Between the States as Edward Zwick's civics lesson *Glory* (1989) and the soap operatics of *Gone With the Wind* are revealed as arrant juvenilia.

Come February 21, *Gods and Generals* will invade the nation's theaters in a commercial gamble by Warner Brothers that could be a masterstroke, à la Lincoln's maneuvering at Fort Sumter, or a disaster on the order of Pickett's Charge. The four-hour-plus *Gettysburg* was a commercial and critical success, but that and six dollars will buy Maxwell a cup of coffee in Hollywood.

Bill Kauffman's Dispatches From the Muckdog Gazette *will be published by Henry Holt in March.*

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Warner Bros. Pictures/Van Redin

Bringing on the cavalry in *Gods and Generals*.

Over eggs and toast in Charlotte, I spoke with the writer-director on the morning after his film was screened for one of those putatively Middle American "test audiences" that corporations solicit to grade shampoo, new flavors of M&M's, and big-budget movies. Maxwell is intense yet personable. He feels the obvious exasperation of a filmmaker who has created a masterpiece and is being told to slice and dice it so that teenagers who arrive at the cineplex too late to catch *Dude, Where's My Car? III* might be tempted by the "awesome battle scenes" of Maxwell's film.

"They operate from fear and loathing and a complete lack of understanding of what this film is about," says Maxwell of studio executives. "They might as well be looking at hieroglyphics."

In test markets like Charlotte, the film scored spectacularly high with men over the age of 35 and not so well with teenage girls. Which, in the cockeyed logic of the studios, meant that the film must be shorn for the legion of Britneys incapable of sitting still for 225 minutes, even with a nose-powdering intermission. "They want to cut, cut, cut to make it more palatable for everybody," says Maxwell with disgust.

"There's a feeling in Hollywood that the audience doesn't care about history."

I ask Maxwell why so few films are made about American history. "There's a feeling in Hollywood that the audience doesn't care," he answers. "I think that's because those who make the decisions don't care about history. Their field of view is contemporary. Many studio executives, because they aren't interested in looking beyond their own lifetimes, draw the conclusion that no one else is interested, either. They don't understand that an audience is out there. Of course, they haven't catered to that audience for decades."

The epigraph to *Gods and Generals* is from George Eliot: "A human life, I think, should be well rooted in some spot of a native land, where it may get the love of tender kinship.... The best introduction to astronomy is to think of the nightly heavens as a little lot of stars belonging to one's own homestead." Maxwell thus tips us off even before the first strains of the powerful John Frizzell-Randy Edelman score that what we are about to see is not the Hollywood-squared version of the Civil War, in which Father Abraham and the purehearts vanquish blackguard slaveowners and the drooling proto-Klansmen who fight for them. We are in for a challenging and uncommonly intelligent film. In conversation, Maxwell cites as influences Edmund Wilson's *Patriotic Gore*, Gore Vidal's *Lincoln*, and the Southern poet Allen Tate—works in which the war is rather more complex than the simple-minded morality play of a social-studies text.

The abolitionists, God bless them, were right on the big issue of the day: 'tis a painfully incomplete "freedom" that includes the right to own men, women, and children. To the extent the Confederacy was built on man-owning, it was repellent. But as Maxwell understands—seemingly alone among those few who have deemed the Civil War worthy of celluloid—this was not the only issue, and to some Southerners, it was not even the major issue.

Gods and Generals is loosely based on a novel by Jeff Shaara, son of Michael Shaara, whose beloved novel *The Killer Angels* was the source of *Gettysburg*. In the earlier film, Maxwell's rendering of Pickett's Charge and the Battle for Little Round Top were shattering in their depiction of valor and carnage. But if *Gettysburg* is an absorbing film, it is very much an anatomization of that famous battle.

Gods and Generals is a character study: not merely of men at war, but of specific men in a specific war. Maxwell follows four of the war's best officers—Confederates Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson and Robert E. Lee, and Joshua Chamberlain and Winfield Scott Hancock of the Union army—through three battles leading up to Gettysburg: First Bull Run, Fredericksburg, and Chancellorsville. His focus settles on Jackson, seemingly the

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Rob Gibson

Clockwise from upper left: "Stonewall" Jackson, John Bell Hood, James Longstreet, and Robert E. Lee, as portrayed in the film. This photograph and the two other sepia tones in this article are part of a remarkable series shot by Gettysburg, Pennsylvania photographer/re-enactor Rob Gibson. Gibson uses exactly the same equipment and wet-plate techniques as the Civil War-era's pioneering cameramen. The result is contemporary shots rendered in scrupulously accurate historical styles.

most forbidding of the quartet, a strange, distant, severely religious lemon-sucking man of the western Virginia mountains.

This is a film of marvelous parts: Meagher's Irish Brigade advances into the hellfire of a *rebel* Irish unit on the fields of Fredericksburg. A reb and a Yankee wordlessly share a cup of coffee and a smoke on a rock in the Rappahannock River. In a delightfully playful scene, an exotic pair of camp troubadors—a kind of CSA Sonny and Cher—belt out a rollicking version of "The Bonnie Blue Flag" to a hand-clapping knee-slapping audience of Confederate brass, including Robert E. Lee, who mumbles the lyrics, obviously caught up in the exuberance of the tune but always so damned mindful of his dignity.

Like the Civil War nurse surnamed Whitman, Maxwell's sympathies lie on all sides, on every side. How perfect, then, that Bob Dylan sings the haunting "Cross the Green Mountain" over the closing credits, his plaint sounding like Appalachia by way of Hibbing, Minnesota, as abolitionist folkie meets Jewish Confederate in the great song that is America. If Maxwell seems to be of two—or 22—minds about the war, that makes him all the more deeply dyed in the American grain. For what man born with a living soul cannot see both the moral imperative of abolition *and* the nobility of men defending their homeland?

Shelby Foote's only complaint about *Gettysburg* was that Robert Duvall, *the* great American actor, did not play Robert E. Lee. (Martin Sheen was Marse Robert the first time around.) This time, the Virginian Duvall gets his chance to play the general who is his matrilineal ancestor. Borrowing from Michael Shaara's title, Maxwell suggests, "It would be fair to say that Martin Sheen emphasized the angel and Robert Duvall emphasized the killer."

Maxwell expects to draw flak for his depiction of Confederate soldiers as human beings rather than the racist caricatures which the viewer expects in a modern film. "The culture has stiffened into a politically correct straitjacket," he says. "People don't feel they have permission to question certain shibboleths: among them that the Civil War was fought *only* for slavery."

Maxwell provides the fairest, most eloquent exposition of the Southern point of view ever presented on film—and yet as counterpoint we have always Joshua Chamberlain, the fighting scholar of the 20th Maine and the conscience of the movie, reminding us that black-skinned Americans are being held as chattel. "I do question a system that defends its own freedom while it denies it to others," Chamberlain tells his brother, and here we have the paradox of the CSA.

Contra Chamberlain, General Jackson frames the war as a question of competing patriotisms: "Though I love the Union, I love Virginia more." He explains to his Shenandoah Valley volunteers at the war's outset: "Just as we would not send any of our soldiers to march in other states and tyrannize other people, so will we never allow the armies of others to march into our state and tyrannize our people." Jackson describes the fight as a conflict between the industrial North and the agrarian South. Defeat means not just the liberation of slaves; it would augur "the triumph of commerce, banks, and the factory."

Maxwell makes Jackson, played by Stephen Lang in a career-making performance, the film's emotional and narrative centerpiece. His Stonewall is devout and adamant, but also quite capable of tenderness, as we see in a lyrical passage depicting Jackson's fondness for a doomed five-year-old girl.

Among Maxwell's great virtues as a filmmaker is his honesty. His respect for his subjects never slips into hagiography. Just as even the most hardened Yank in the audience has warmed to Jackson, three Confederate deserters are hauled before the general. His aide gently suggests a policy of mercy, but the commander will have none of it. The boys are quickly tried and executed; Jackson watches impassively as their bullet-torn bodies tumble backwards into their hastily dug graves. To measure the distance at which *Gods and Generals* stands from most movie histories, compare Maxwell's complex Jackson with the cartoonish John Quincy Adams (good guy!) and John C. Calhoun (bad guy!) in Steven Spielberg's jejune *Amistad*.

It is no accident that "Gods" precedes "Generals" in the film's title, for God is a constant and pervasive presence in the film. Jackson and Lee invoke God's name, and see themselves as instruments of His will. As Jackson tells his wife upon his deathbed, "Pray for me. But in your prayers, never forget to use the petition, 'Thy will be done.'" We wait for the kicker: In modern films, religious men must be exposed in all their hypocritical sanctimony. Surely Jackson's piety will be lampooned, or revealed for the oleaginous sham that it is. But no. Maxwell even has the gall to depict Jackson committing a wholly unexpected act of...tolerance!

As Stonewall sits at the deathbed of General Maxcy Gregg, Jack-

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son urges Gregg to "turn your thoughts to God." Gregg patiently replies that he is "not a believer." Jackson answers, "Then I will believe for the both of us." It is a quiet moment that resounds.

Jackson's relationship with his cook, Jim Lewis, a freeman of color, is rich and unsentimentalized. They shake hands upon meeting—Jackson calls him "Mister"—and if the times leave no question as to Lewis's social subordination, Christian morality has a way of confounding matters. As the men pray on a winter's eve, Lewis offers an impromptu petition: "How is it Lo'd, can you 'splain sumpin' to dis ol' Virginy man? How is it a good Christian man like some folks I know can tolerate dey black brothers in bondage? How it is Lo'd, dat dey don't jes break dem chains?" The tragedy of American politics is that the South hadn't an answer.

Lewis (subtly played by Frankie Faison) and the film's other significant African-American character, a domestic slave named Martha (played by Donzaleigh Abernethy, daughter of civil rights titan Ralph), are not the usual ahistorical cardboard cutouts, but complicated human beings actuated by love, loyalty, and a yearning to be no man's vassal. Yet, I tell Maxwell, he's in for it. Contemporary etiquette requires movie slaves to speak the King's English, outwit their cruel and thick-skulled white masters, and have the rebellious gleam of Nat Turner in their eyes.

Maxwell wonders if audience members will think that Lewis's status as a freeman is a put-on: "They'll just have this received wisdom that all blacks in the South were slaves." Yet "how can you not have Jim Lewis" in the film? "He was with Jackson all the time. He was in the inner circle." Viewers will be jolted by the sight of black men laboring in the Confederate cause. "Ninety percent of the cooks, quartermasters, or wagonmasters were African Americans," says Maxwell. "The Confederate Army couldn't have crossed the street without African Americans, let alone fight a war."

Jim Lewis speaks in dialect. The black and white actors in *Gods and Generals* studied with dialect coach Robert Easton to achieve lingual verisimilitude. "We're not making people look like uneducated hicks or emphasizing racial stereotypes," protests Maxwell, whose film is awash in what he calls a "symphony of dialects" with sources ranging from the Mississippi Delta to the crags of Maine. "You're dealing with specific places and a specific time," says the director. "There is no air travel, no Internet, no television. People lived their lives within a few miles of where they were born."

One of the film's signal virtues is its respect for place. In a beautiful moment written by Maxwell, Robert E. Lee surveys the lovely land around Fredericksburg from atop a hill, before the battle. Lee explains to his adjutant that this is where he met the woman who would become his wife. He muses, "It's something these Yankees do not understand, will never understand. Rivers, hills, valleys, fields, even towns: To those people they're just markings on a map from the war office in Washington. To us, they're birthplaces and burial grounds, they're battlefields where our ancestors fought. They're places where we learned to walk, to talk, to pray. They're places where we made friendships and fell in love.... They're the incarnation of all our memories and all that we love."

This film asks the vital question: What is patriotism? "For Chamberlain, the fundamental unit of patriotism is the United States of America," says Maxwell. "For Jackson and Lee, it is their state. The men are equally patriotic; they are admirable in that they have a sense of the group that transcends their individuality. But what are the borders of that country?"

This film asks the vital question: What is patriotism?

In an earlier Civil War epic, Ross Lockridge, Jr.'s forgotten novel *Raintree County* (1948), Professor Jerusalem Webster Stiles confidently predicts, "The new generations will look back on the Civil War with great calm. It's hard to feel sorry for folks who died a hundred years ago." Sorry, professor. The war seems to grow in the national imagination as it recedes in time. I ask Maxwell why.

"It's the only major war fought on our soil," he replies. "It ravaged our country, especially the South. The other American wars were fought against 'aliens': This was a family feud. Americans who can trace their ancestry back to the nineteenth century have a direct relationship to the war. And the tension between individual and local decisions and federal government decisions is still with us today."

Maxwell says that his Civil War films "would be impossible

Rob Gibson

A group of 20th Maine Union soldiers, including immigrants from Ireland, as recorded on the movie set.

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to make" without the thousands of dedicated re-enactors who compose his cinematic armies. He attributes the popularity of re-enacting to a desire "to return to what people think was a simpler time, a time of greater moral clarity." He says this without condescension; in fact, with sympathy. "These are particularly confusing times because of the rapidity of change. We no longer live our lives in one locality. We're moving all the time, changing jobs. Our children and parents are spread out over continents. Through television we are kept in a state of constant agitation. No generation before ours has been under such assault on what many believe to be traditional values. So I think people want to retreat: to leave the whole bloody twentieth century behind"—even to find solace in the bloodiest fields of the nineteenth century.

A decade has passed between the release of *Gettysburg* and the appearance of *Gods and Generals*. I ask Maxwell if his understanding of the war has changed.

"Yes," he instantly replies. "My sense of the tragedy of the war has been deepened. That's why I wanted Shakespeare to comment on the war through Booth."

Yes, *that* Booth.

In a device as audacious as it is brilliant, Maxwell has a pair of traveling Southern Shakespearean actors, James Harrison and John Wilkes Booth, offer a running commentary on secession, war, and the duty of the artist. Booth had a flair for Shakespearean regicides. "It's almost as if he was trained by the greatest writer who ever lived to kill the monarch," marvels Maxwell. The Booth scenes are witty and foreboding. There is an unnerving moment when Booth, playing MacBeth at Washington's Grover's Theater, locks eyes with Lincoln as he declaims, "I see thee still, And on thy blade and dudgeon gouts of blood."

Fanny Chamberlain, wife of Joshua, asks Booth after a performance of *Julius Caesar* whether his Brutus is a hero or villain. Booth replies, "It is for the audience to decide who is hero, who is villain. We simply play the parts allotted to us."

Maxwell understands just how startling it will be for an audience to see Southerners presented as men who believe they are fighting a defensive war against Yankee imperialists. But Fanny's question, he says, really applies to this entire astonishing film.

The phrase "great American novel" was coined by John W. De Forest, who wrote the first important novel of the Civil War, *Miss Ravenel's Conversion From Secession to Loyalty* (1867). From Stephen Crane to the Shaaras, American writers have engaged this central event in our national history with wit and fury and imagination, but our filmmakers have

TAE Chats With Robert Duvall

Robert Duvall's version of Robert E. Lee ought to pass muster with the most scrupulous of Civil War buffs. Costumed in Confederate regalia, with technical help from the same make-up artist flown in from Italy who helped create Duvall's hardened look as Augustus McCrae in the 1989 television miniseries *Lonesome Dove,* the 72-year-old Duvall bears a strong resemblance to Lee. Both actor and general also share a northern Virginia ancestry, and the powerful influence of fathers who were prominent military men.

Duvall's father, William Howard Duvall, was a rear admiral in the U.S. Navy during World War II. "Bobby" grew up in military towns such as San Diego and Annapolis, graduated from Principia College in Illinois, then spent two years in the Army. More recently, he has been travelling in the upper echelon of the film world, starring in movies like *M*A*S*H, The Godfather, Apocalypse Now,* and *The Great Santini*. He has been called "the best we have, the American Olivier" by *New York Times* critic Vincent Canby.

Duvall, however, is dismissive of nearly all Hollywood trappings. He abhors the vast sums of money studios commit to disposable pictures, saying "You should see the stuff they waste money on." And he will tell you time and again that filmmakers have either caricatured or ignored heartland America—which he tries to rectify with the projects he personally champions. "The average workingman has dignity that the Hollywood establishment has overlooked," says Duvall with real passion. "These *Village Voices*, these provincial rags of New York City," he laughs. "You've got to get out and travel—you've got to get out and look. The center of this country, and the South especially, have been patronized and made fun of. If I can do anything at all in my work to show what dignity is in the common person, then that's what my life is really about."

Duvall insists that even rednecks, for whom Hollywood reserves its most severe venom, should have their fair shake. In his 1997 film *A Family Thing*, which Duvall produced himself, he plays a bigoted Arkansas hardware store owner who discovers that his mother was black. When he travels to Chicago in his red pick-up to find the African-American brother he's never met (played by James Earl Jones), a powerfully sincere and touching portrayal unfolds. Likewise, in *The Apostle*—which he wrote, directed, starred in, and edited in an annex to his house—Duvall asked Billy Bob Thornton "to play this guy who objects to integrated worship services, without judging him. I wanted to avoid condescending to these people."

"We need to have real people up there on the screen," says Duvall. These days he cares not a whit for Hollywood acclaim. "I got into acting because I wanted to act, not become a star." Most films, Duvall complains, "patronize and put quotation marks around everything. You want something real. It's either real life, or it's phony. There isn't anything bigger than actual life."

One of the most memorable characters in *The Apostle*, a radio station owner/announcer named Elmo, was played by a man from Arkansas called Rick Dial whom Duvall recruited from a furniture store. "I had to have him," says Duvall. "We needed to work around his job, and our costume guy would put Rick's arms out and fit him for clothes while he was selling a dining room set. He's a natural actor, a good citizen, you know—a church-going man. Someone sent him a script with bad lan-

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largely scorned it as a tedious interlude in a school textbook. Until Ron Maxwell.

As for the eternal war of artist versus philistine? Win some, lose some. Warner Brothers will release the film at three hours and 30 minutes, with an intermission. To save those measly 15 minutes, John Wilkes Booth is gone. His marvelous scenes, so critical to the movie, have been excised, though they will be restored when the DVD of *Gods and Generals* is released this summer.

Whether or not Maxwell completes a Civil War trilogy with *The Last Full Measure*, in which Booth plays his last regicide, "totally depends on the box office," he shrugs. The most recent Civil War movie, Ang Lee's commendable *Ride With the Devil* (1999), flopped, despite the winsome presence of the pop singer Jewel. If there is not an audience of American adults for the gem-like *Gods and Generals*, then maybe Hollywood is right to hold us in contempt.

Ron Maxwell has given us an American masterpiece about the most myth-laden, destructive, and regenerative episode in American history. Who are the heroes? Who are the villains? You decide.

Rob Gibson

Robert E. Lee as played by Robert Duvall, and photographed by Rob Gibson.

guage and Rick said, 'I can't do that. What are all those little ladies who come in to buy furniture from me going to think about me in a movie with four letter words?' I love this guy."

One thing that keeps Duvall close to reality is spending time on his 250-year-old northern Virginia farm. His little hamlet of The Plains is a long way geographically, politically, and spiritually from what Duvall calls the "mink-coat liberals" who live in Beverly Hills and Brentwood. But the split-rail fences and rolling meadows are also a long distance from where Robert Duvall himself stood 25 years ago. He was then an impetuous up-and-comer who fancied himself a Manhattan urbanite while starring on Broadway in David Mamet's, *American Buffalo*. "I thought I was on the Upper West Side's side," he says, laughing. His journey since then has taken him a long way. Among other things, "Virginia became so special to me—historically speaking. And beauty-wise, as well."

The recent project that seems to resonate most with Duvall's affection for Virginia is *Gods and Generals*, the new Civil War saga from filmmaker Ron Maxwell, which was filmed in the Shenandoah Valley and nearby Maryland. Maxwell had wanted Duvall to play Robert E. Lee in his earlier masterpiece *Gettysburg*, and Duvall had agreed in concept. "But when we finally went forward with it in the winter and spring of 1992, Bobby wasn't available," says Maxwell. He ended up casting Martin Sheen for the part instead. With Sheen now committed to his NBC drama *The West Wing*, "we went back to Duvall. It was full circle," states Maxwell.

The role seems to have come easily for Duvall. "I didn't have to read a hundred and fifty books on the guy, that's for sure," he says. "He was from northern Virginia, and that's exactly where my father was from, and they were both professional military men. My father was definitely a Virginia gentleman, so I just spoke with the accent of my dad."

Duvall didn't have total freedom to develop his character. He had read that Lee went to Gettysburg in a horse-drawn hospital cart because his hands were maimed by being bucked off his horse, Traveller. "I said to Ron, 'Why can't I be soaking my hands in a bowl of warm water and epsom salts in order to make it much more human and just let the scene develop?' The guy flatly refused. I didn't have as much *carte blanche* as I thought I might." Nevertheless, both actor and director seem pleased with the result. "Bobby gave an outstanding performance," Maxwell says.

Ironically, Duvall's family on his father's side, though Virginians, all had pro-Northern sympathies. "We grew up knowing that Lee was a revered figure. After all, my father's people were Southerners. But they were pro-Union behind enemy lines." Duvall's grandfather was actually named Abraham Lincoln Duvall.

In many ways, Duvall's personal situation epitomizes America's Civil War: mixed loyalties, love torn between different sides, a situation as mixed and complex as human feeling. And that's the way Duvall decided to portray Lee. "He was a revered guy. But you've still got to present the character the same way you would any other one. You've got to play him as a human being."

—John Meroney

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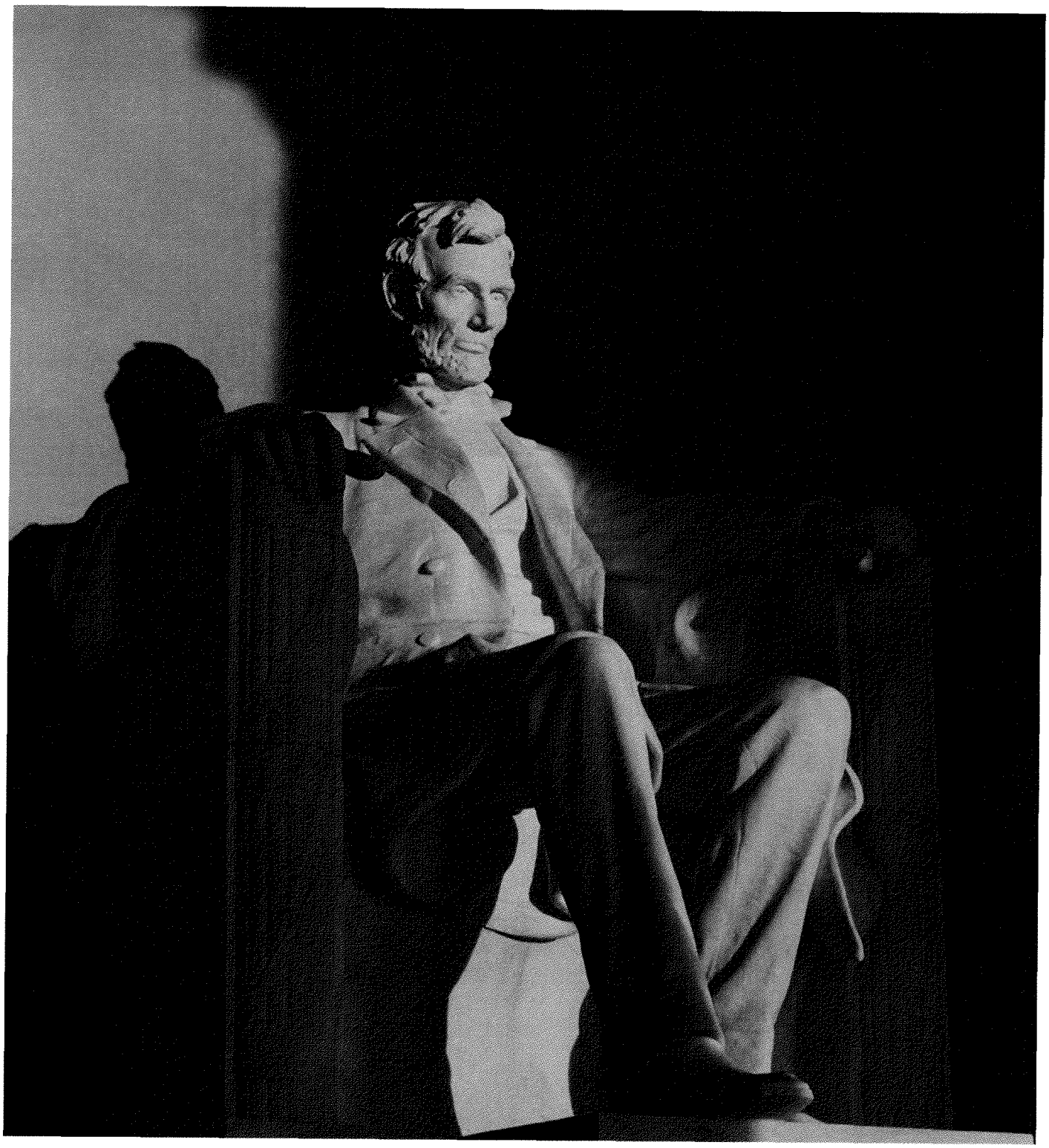
Revising Mr. Lincoln

A new debate bursts out—
Jay Winik and Dinesh D'Souza assess it



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Bending Fate to A Higher Purpose

By Jay Winik

Late March of 1865. So anxious was Abraham Lincoln about ending the Civil War that when he received word of Robert E. Lee's bold but failed attempt to break through Ulysses S. Grant's lines outside Petersburg, the President rushed off to see the battlefield himself. From inside a slow-rolling train, Lincoln gazed morosely at the hideous remnants of war: carcasses of army horses, trees splintered by military fire, flocks of buzzards hovering over the fields. The earth lay blackened, and in every direction it seemed mutilated corpses were being carried off for burial.

Lincoln surely felt some satisfaction over the morning's exhilarating victory and its portents for a quicker end to the conflict. But this was quickly mitigated by a line of Rebel prisoners that crossed his view. He commented on the "sad condition" of these exhausted opponents, adding quietly that he "had seen enough of the horrors of war," and that he hoped this "was the beginning of the end." In this moment we see vintage Lincoln: the humanity, the tenderness, and a rare capacity to embrace the enemy as his own.

And yet, there is another Lincoln, one captured in an image of several weeks earlier. It speaks of something different: of a man of steel and grit, of what some might see as a darker side. In February of 1865—just before calling in his Second Inaugural for "malice toward none" and "charity for all"—Lincoln held a peace conference with three Confederate representatives, including CSA vice president Alexander Stephens. At that moment, Lincoln was the very picture of exhaustion: his face heavily lined, his cheeks sunken, having lost 30 pounds in recent months. Stephens, who had served with Lincoln in Congress, stated: "Mr. President, if we understand you correctly, you think we of the Confederacy have committed treason; that we are traitors to your government; that we have forfeited our rights and are proper subjects for the hangman."

"Yes," Lincoln responded rather icily, "that is about the size of it…"

Which of these images, the sympathetic, caring sufferer or the cool realist, was the real Abraham Lincoln?

By most measures, Lincoln's lofty position in American history seems undentable. He saved the Union, freed the slaves, knit the country together toward war's end, and gave a new birth to freedom. He penned addresses that will reside forever in the nation's memory. He died a martyr. Lincoln seems to rise above other Presidents onto a different moral plane, becoming a near Christ-like figure, the closest to a saint as exists in our national consciousness.

Yet even Lincoln's most ardent supporters recognize that he abounds with contradictions. He was a man of genuine moral stature who was a shameless politician; a true intellectual and a lover of history and literature who had no use for authors such as Darwin and Spencer; a man of humble origins who blazed with ambition. One would be hard pressed to find another American figure about whom so many myths abound.

His simplicity and self-derogation were real. He was invariably out of fashion; he greeted visitors with "howdy"; his pockets were always jammed with notes to himself. His two most memorable speeches—at Gettysburg and his Second Inaugural—total fewer than 1,000 words. Lincoln was a riddle of quirks and impenetrable eccentricities.

Little wonder, then, that a staggering 7,000 books have been written about him, more than about any other single American figure. Each generation revises and redefines the Lincoln it knows. Even today, his words became the defining text for the commemoration of the 9/11 attacks.

Recently, however, the debate about Lincoln has become fiercer, even harsh. New critics have appeared on both Left and Right, and their message is blunt: This revered President doesn't belong in America's pantheon.

There is abundant evidence for Lincoln's deep hostility to slavery.

The most strident new critique comes from Lerone Bennett, executive editor of *Ebony* magazine and author of several works of black history. In *Forced Into Glory: Abraham Lincoln's White Dream,* Bennett contends Lincoln was a crude bigot who habitually used "the N word," made demeaning "darky" jokes, had an unquenchable thirst for black-face minstrel shows and supported the noxious "black laws" of the day. Bennett's main theme, however, is that Lincoln was a reluctant emancipator, belatedly dragged by escaping slaves, abolitionists, and Congressional Republicans into announcing the Emancipation Proclamation, which, in any case, was but a "ploy" to build support for his hope of deporting U.S. slaves to Central and South America and Africa. "Racial cleansing became, 72 years before the Third Reich, 133 years before Bosnia, the official policy of the United States," writes Bennett. Lincoln's fondest dream, he insists, was of a "lily white America without Native Americans, African Americans, and Martin Luther Kings."

On the opposite side of the political spectrum, anti-Lincoln attacks just as sharp as Bennett's have recently been launched by an alliance of libertarians, far right conservatives, and neo-Confederates. Leading lights include Thomas DiLorenzo, a libertarian professor of economics at Loyola College, Clyde Wilson, professor at the University of South Carolina, and libertarian polemicist Lew Rockwell. Like Bennett, they see a cabal of "court historians" devoted to perpetuating countless Lincoln "myths." Like Bennett, they impugn Lincoln's moral character, then add the

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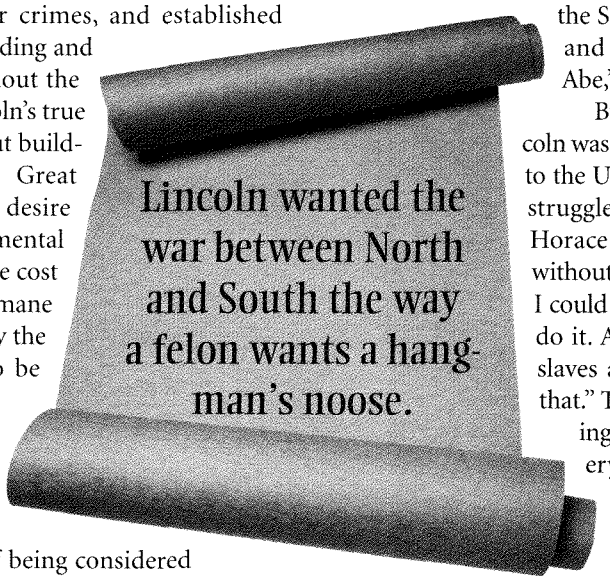
extra claim that Lincoln was a ruthless, needless dictator.

In his recent book *The Real Lincoln*, DiLorenzo charges that Lincoln presided over "the demolition of Constitutional liberties" and openly "subverted Constitutional government in America." Lincoln waged the Civil War "unnecessarily" rather than allowing slavery to end "peacefully," and is personally responsible for 620,000 battlefield deaths. In contravention to existing rules of war, Lincoln waged a brutal conflict against innocent civilians, committed war crimes, and established "countless excuses…for empire building and war-mongering politicians throughout the world in the decades to come." Lincoln's true agenda was not freeing the slaves, but building an empire that would rival Great Britain's. Moreover, Lincoln's real desire was to create a "centralized governmental system," says DiLorenzo, and the true cost of "his war" was the death of the humane system of government established by the Founding Fathers. Strong stuff, to be sure. But is any of it true?



Lincoln's critics are sometimes right on overlooked facts. Their views and analyses are at times worthy of being considered seriously. And there is something to be said, every now and then, for dusting off the old Lincoln bust and seeing what lies beneath. But these critics on the left and the right also get many things wrong. To varying degrees, they use evidence selectively, distort the record, ignore contrary findings, and overlook the political, cultural, and intellectual realities of Lincoln's day. They ignore the evolution of Lincoln's views. Their writings, especially in the case of Bennett, read like political screeds, and include a fair degree of hysteria.

Let's then start at the beginning, with Lincoln and slavery. Was Lincoln a racist? A reluctant emancipator? A white supremacist?

The critics are certainly right that Lincoln shared many of the racial prejudices of the day. They are equally right that until (but not after) 1863, he flirted with an array of entirely voluntary schemes to resettle blacks abroad as a way of addressing America's slave problem (much as Jefferson had contemplated). Lincoln did indeed lag behind the radical abolitionist wing of his party in supporting emancipation. And in 1865 he did flirt with delaying emancipation as a way of hastening the war's end and reconciling North and South. The question, of course, is why?

As a politician, Lincoln was careful never to step too far ahead of prevailing opinion. He sometimes tuned his political statements for different audiences, and was not above manipulating opinions. In his campaign for President he sought to appeal both to abolitionists and to skeptics. As a practical politician he knew all too well that most of his supporters not only were *not* abolitionists, but outright Negrophobes, who did not want to live or work alongside blacks, free or slave. But his caution, public vacillation, and even accommodation should not obscure Lincoln's deeply felt private hostility to slavery, for which there is abundant evidence.

A good republican, Lincoln was loathe to tamper with the Constitution, which permitted slavery. But he ardently fought the establishment of slavery in the territories, aiming to "arrest" its further spread and place the institution on the "course of ultimate extinction." In his Presidential campaign he hit slavery again and again (in his words, "hit it hard"). He pointed out with eloquence that slavery was wicked if anything was. As Lincoln famously summarized to Alexander Stephens: "You think slavery is right and ought to be extended while we think it is wrong and ought to be restricted." Certainly the South got Lincoln's message. "Free love and free niggers will certainly elect Old Abe," warned one banner.

But when war came, everything for Lincoln was subordinate to his mystical attachment to the Union. "My paramount objective in this struggle is to save the Union," he wrote to Horace Greeley. "If I could save the Union without freeing any slaves, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves I would do it. And if I could save it by freeing some slaves and leaving others alone I would do that." The great question facing Lincoln during the secession crisis was no longer slavery *per se*, but the very survival of the nation itself. Immediate political considerations had, of necessity, to trump all other issues.

Lincoln's task was complicated by the fact that while a noisy minority of radicals were insisting on immediate liberation of the slaves, a far greater portion of Northern opinion was dubious about a headlong crusade for emancipation. And keep in mind the challenge for the largely self-educated Lincoln: He had not held public office in over two decades (indeed had never held anything higher than one obscure term as a congressman), had no executive experience, no diplomatic experience, virtually no military experience, had never been abroad, and had never overseen anything larger than a two-man law office. And he was a man so prone to gloom that he once mourned, "I laugh because I cannot weep."

Where would this man get the inner resolve and wit to weather the cataclysm he faced? Lincoln wanted this war the way a felon wants a hangman's noose. Yet somehow—and this is his genius and the source of the Lincoln legend—at the crack of doom, this once second-rate politician found his mettle.

Was secession illegal, as Lincoln maintained? This is debatable. Was the war necessary? Certainly yes, if the Union was to be saved. Lincoln wasn't the only talented man on the national stage who failed to prevent bloodshed. Senator Jefferson Davis was just as unsuccessful. The forces of secession, having mounted over decades, were too strong.

When the war broke out, things remained nearly as muddy. Lincoln immediately found himself in a huge administrative mess, with every agency from the White House to the army in utter disarray. Never before had an administration had to cope with a massive insurrection. Lincoln had to address vexing problems for which no precedents existed. His Cabinet members operated individual fiefdoms, and often worked against each other. The capital was a whirlwind of confusion and chaos.

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Still, there should be no disguising of the early mistakes made by Lincoln. As Lincoln mulled the latest dispatches at the War Department, he was anything but a confident Commander in Chief. He had generals who wouldn't fight, couldn't fight, failed to press the advantage when they did fight, or simply got whipped. He put himself though a crash course in strategy of war, checking out books from the Library of Congress. He, as much as the rest of the nation, had to be brought up to speed.

But as the war ground on and the body count mounted, Lincoln pressed forward with brooding detachment, weathering his own mistakes and the highs and lows of the battlefield. Significantly, he always kept his eye on the great goal, avoiding national dismemberment, which he knew passionately could only be achieved by force of arms. He pursued this purpose with a dogged tenacity—even when there were opportunities to strike a cheaper deal or grab an easy way out. A lesser man would have been tempted many times to grab one of the expedient escapes repeatedly urged on him, even as late as 1864. But he was a rock of high resolve.

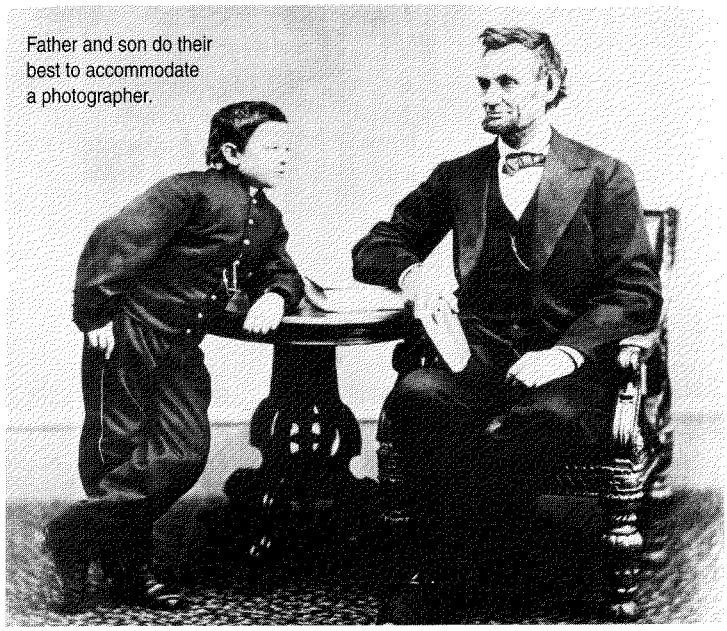
He knew he could not fight a war on two fronts, and his critics are right that when it came to coping with what he once called "the enemy in the rear" he was stern, occasionally closing newspapers, suspending *habeas corpus*, defying a hostile Supreme Court Chief Justice, imprisoning ordinary people and even duly elected legislators (one Democratic congressman was forcibly exiled from the Union—see page 49). Lincoln did all this unapologetically, foreshadowing Justice Jackson's later view that "the Constitution is not a suicide pact." If this makes Lincoln a dictator, he is in the same company as our other war-time Presidents, all of whom took extraordinary actions to protect the security of our country. As Lincoln himself put it, "You don't fight wars by blowing rose water through corn stalks."

Where Lincoln was perhaps most masterful was in weathering the swirling forces of public opinion. If you think the Vietnam War protests were ugly, study the Civil War. The four-day New York City draft riots killed at least 105 people, including blacks brutally hung from lampposts. As late as 1864, the North was in a foul mood, with antiwar protesters crying out for any peace. The Democrats had a peace plank in their Presidential platform calling for immediate unilateral cessation of hostilities.

It was into this atmosphere that Lincoln, whom critics now deride as a white supremacist, would issue his Emancipation Proclamation, the most revolutionary document in the country's history since the Declaration of Independence, and then lobby vigorously for the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution ending slavery for all time. It was in this atmosphere that Lincoln would, at war's end, dramatically declare his support for some blacks to vote, which prompted growls from John Wilkes Booth in the audience. (This would be the last speech of the President's life.) And it was in this atmosphere that Lincoln unleashed a general named William Tecumseh Sherman.

In May 1864, when Grant and Lee squared off for the first time in the Wilderness Campaign, Lincoln scarcely slept for four days. Hands behind his back, head bowed, he wandered the White House corridors, muttering "I must have some relief from this terrible anxiety or it will kill me." It almost did.

Grant suffered some 52,000 casualties in those six weeks



Father and son do their best to accommodate a photographer.

alone, nearly as many men as we lost in the entirety of the Vietnam War. At Cold Harbor, he lost a staggering 9,000 men in less than one hour—some three times as many as fell in Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg. Lincoln himself declared the "heavens hung in black." But when Congress and even Mary Lincoln began to call for Grant's head after this terrible carnage, Lincoln ripped back: "I can't spare him. He fights!"

Here is a second key to the Lincoln legend: sheer tenacity and unflappable leadership. At this stage, Lincoln understood that only the toughest measures could win the war and save the Union. As critics point out, he embraced the concept of total war, and undertook an escalatory measure that had been unthinkable at the conflict's outset. Eventually Sherman's march unleashed hundreds of miles of destruction.

If Amnesty International had existed in his day, Lincoln would have been condemned. No matter. He did it with few regrets. And the South got the message. Here's Confederate General Joe Johnston: "When I learned of Sherman's march…I made up my mind that there had been no such army in existence since the days of Julius Caesar."

But if Lincoln was guilty of war crimes, arguably so too were George Washington and other revolutionary rebels who defied the prevailing rules of war (fighting out of uniform, picking off officers with sharpshooters). Arguably so too were Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman, who firebombed Dresden and Tokyo and then dropped two atomic bombs. Washington created our country, Roosevelt and Truman saved the Western world. Lincoln preserved a Union that virtually all Southerners themselves now revere.

Having waged total war, Lincoln offered a generous, truly magnanimous peace. In the process he did much to heal and re-knit the country, thus sparing America the grisly wake of internecine war that has often been the norm throughout history, as in Northern Ireland and the Balkans. When Lincoln was asked in April 1865 by the commanding general in Richmond how the defeated Southerners should be treated, he answered: "I would let 'em up easy, let 'em up easy." As Lee himself put it: "I surrendered as much to Lincoln's goodness as I did to Grant's armies."

To critics who say Lincoln was fanatically devoted to the idea

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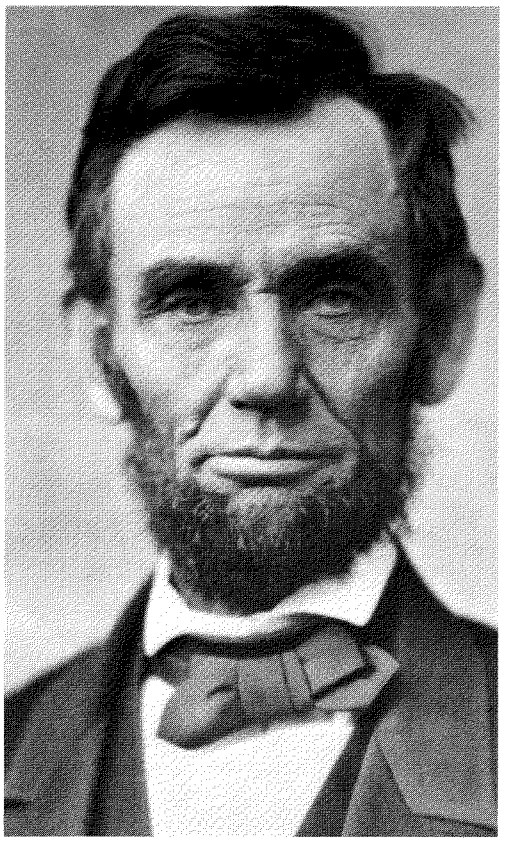
of big government, one can point out what he said to his Cabinet on the last day of his life. Discussing his outlines for Reconstruction, he chided those who wanted to direct the reorganization of the states from Washington: "We can't undertake to run state governments in these Southern states. Their people must do that," even if "at first, some of them do it badly." That evening, Lincoln was assassinated.

Lincoln's legacy will always be marred in the eyes of the purists, or of those who fail to view him in the context of his age. For the critics on both the left and the right, he will remain insufficiently abolitionist, overly dictatorial, too accomodationist, too warlike, too pro-Southern, too pro-black, too pro-government, too political, too shrewd. Nearly all of these criticisms were made by his detractors during the war itself.

Lincoln was surely no saint. But the enormous responsibility that fell upon him was as murky, dirty, difficult, unprecedented, and fraught with peril as any ever faced by a political leader. Throughout, he refused to quit, to compromise important principles, or take the easy way out when it presented itself. He stood up heroically to forces of division and protest from outside and from among his own people, week in and week out, for years. He sacked general after general until he found one who could fight.



Eventually, Lincoln embraced total war, seeing no alternative. But his heart was never hard. In April 1865, he faced down the Radical Republican Senators and many in his own Cabinet to embrace a remarkable compassion and charity toward the Confederates, when revenge and anger were poised to carry the day. Lincoln instinctively understood the moral burdens he had to shoulder; he appreciated the high seriousness of his crisis; and he grasped its tragic proportions without losing sight of the good that could eventually arise out of this awful conflict. He rescued our nation at its darkest hour, and in so doing became freedom's champion as well.

The record suggests Lincoln did not dwell overly on his own legacy—but he was deeply conscious of his country's place in history. Second-rate men are shaped and manipulated by the force of events. Very few great leaders find ways to bend the fates to their higher purposes. Abraham Lincoln was one.

A True Philosophical Statesman

By Dinesh D'Souza

Powerful movements have gathered over the last few years, on both the political right and left, to condemn Abraham Lincoln as a flawed, even wicked, man. What unites the right-wing and left-wing attacks is the denial that Lincoln respected the law.

The right-wing school—made up largely of Southerners and some libertarians—holds that Lincoln rode roughshod over civil liberties, greatly expanded the size of the federal government, and destroyed half the country to serve his Caesarian ambitions. The late Texas professor Mel Bradford excoriated Lincoln as a moral fanatic who, determined to enforce his vision of good and evil on the country, ended up corrupting American politics.

Although Bradford viewed Lincoln as a kind of manic abolitionist, many in the neo-Confederate camp insist that the war was driven primarily by economic motives. They argue, in essence, that the industrial North wanted to destroy the economic basis of the South. Charles Adams, in a recent book, *When in the Course of Human Events: Arguing the Case for Southern Secession*, contends that the causes leading up to the Civil War had virtually nothing to do with slavery.

These attempts to rewrite history have been going on for more than a century. Alexander Stephens, the former vice president of the Confederacy, published a two-volume history of the Civil War between 1868 and 1870 in which he hardly mentioned the institution of slavery. He insisted that the war was an effort to preserve Constitutional government from the tyranny of the majority.

But this is *not* what Stephens said in the great debates leading up to the war. In March 1861, just as the South was seceding, Stephens said that the American Revolution had been based on a premise that was "fundamentally wrong." What was that premise? "The assumption of the equality of the races." By contrast, insisted Stephens, "Our new government is founded upon exactly the opposite idea. Its foundations are laid, its cornerstone rests, upon the great truth that the Negro is not equal to the white man. Slavery—subordination to the superior race—is his natural and normal condition. Our new government is the first in the history of the world based upon this great and moral truth." Likewise, Senator John Calhoun attacked the Declaration of Independence for its declarations of human equality, and Senator James Hammond insisted that "the rock of Gibraltar does not stand so firm on its basis as our slave system."

It is true, of course, that many whites who fought on the Southern side in the Civil War did not own slaves. But, as Calhoun himself pointed out in one of his speeches, they too derived an important benefit from slavery. "With us the two great divisions of society are not the rich and the poor, but white and black; and all the former, the poor as well as the rich, belong to the upper class, and are respected and treated as equals." Calhoun's point is that the South had conferred on all whites a kind of aristocracy of birth, so that even the most wretched and degenerate white man was determined in advance to be better

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than the most intelligent and capable black man. That's why the South's poor whites fought—to protect that privilege.

But what about Lincoln? Though he never waffled on fundamentals, he approached the issue of slavery with prudence and moderation. It was not his intention, in the beginning, to stamp out all enslavement immediately. He conceded that the American founders had agreed to tolerate slavery in the Southern states, and he confessed that he had no power to interfere. The issue on which Lincoln would not bend was whether the federal government could restrict slavery from spreading to new territories. This was the crux of the Presidential campaign of 1860; it was the issue that determined secession and war.

But didn't the South have a right to secede? Lincoln argued that the Southern states entered the Union due to a permanent compact with the Northern states. The Union was based on the principle of majority rule, with Constitutional rights carefully delineated for the minority. Lincoln insisted that since he had been legitimately elected, and since the power to regulate slavery in the territories was nowhere proscribed in the Constitution, the Southern decision to secede amounted to nothing more than a group unilaterally dismembering the country when it was unhappy with the results of an election. No constitutional democracy could function under such conditions. Any decision to dissolve the original national compact could occur only with the consent of all parties involved.

It is true that Lincoln suspended *habeas corpus* and arrested Southern sympathizers. But the nation was in a desperate war in which its very survival was at stake. And of course the federal government did expand during the Civil War, as it expanded during the Revolutionary War, and during World War II. But where is the evidence for neo-Confederate insistence that Lincoln can be blamed for the bloated welfare state? The welfare state did not come to America until well into the twentieth century.

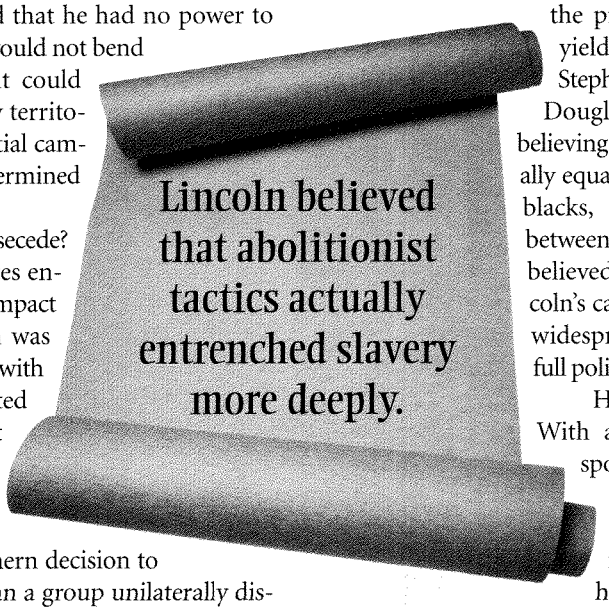
Liberal scholars and African-American activists are also harshly critical of Lincoln on the grounds that he was a racist who didn't really care about ending slavery. The indictment against Lincoln is that as a politician he didn't oppose slavery outright, only the extension of it; and that he went along with laws blocking intermarriage and social and political equality between the races. If the neo-Confederates disdain Lincoln for being too aggressively anti-slavery, the left-wingers scorn him for not being anti-slavery enough.

One cannot understand Lincoln without understanding how he hated slavery yet consistently opposed the strategy of the radical abolitionists. The abolitionists, Lincoln believed, were more concerned with self-righteous moral display than with practical measures to restrict or end slavery. They wanted to be in the right, and damn the consequences. In Lincoln's view, abolition was a noble sentiment, but abolitionist tactics, such as dumping the Constitution and advocating violence, actually entrenched slavery more deeply.

Lincoln knew that the statesman, unlike the moralist, cannot be content with making a case against slavery. He must find a way to implement his principles to the degree that circumstances permit. Lincoln always found a meeting point between what was right in theory and what could be achieved in practice. He always sought the common denominator between what was good and what the people would go along with. In a democratic society, this is the only legitimate way of advancing a moral agenda.

Consider the consummate skill with which Lincoln deflected the prejudices of his supporters without yielding to them. During debates with Stephen Douglas in the Illinois Senate race, Douglas repeatedly accused Lincoln of believing that blacks and whites were intellectually equal, of endorsing full political rights for blacks, and of supporting intermarriage between the races. If large numbers of people believed these charges to be true, then Lincoln's career was over. At that time, there was widespread opposition even in free states to full political and social equality for blacks.

How did Lincoln handle this situation? With a series of artfully conditional responses. "Certainly the Negro is not our equal in color—perhaps not in many other respects; still, in the right to put into his mouth the bread that his own hands have earned, he is the equal of every other man. In pointing out that more has been given to you, you cannot be justified in taking away the little which has been given to him. If God gave him but little, then little let him enjoy."



Notice how little Lincoln concedes to prevailing prejudice. He never acknowledges black inferiority; he merely concedes the possibility. And the thrust of his argument is that even if you believe blacks are inferior, this is not warrant for taking away their rights.

Lincoln was exercising the same prudent statesmanship when he wrote his famous letter to Horace Greeley asserting that his top objective was to save the Union, not to free the slaves. Lincoln wrote this letter on August 22, 1862, a year and a half after the Civil War broke out, when the South was gaining momentum and the outcome was far from certain. Lincoln was desperate to prevent border states like Maryland, Delaware, Kentucky, and Missouri from seceding. These states had slaves, and Lincoln knew that if the war was cast as a fight over slavery, his chances of keeping those border states in the Union were slim. And if all the border states seceded, Lincoln was convinced (rightly) that the cause of the Union was lost. Thus Lincoln framed the case against the Confederacy in terms of saving the Union, protecting the coalition whose victory was essential to the cause of emancipation. And ultimately, slavery did come to an end because of this.

Lincoln was an authentic "philosophical statesman," one who was truly good and truly wise. Standing before his critics, he looms as a colossus, and all of the Lilliputian arrows hurled at him bounce harmlessly to the ground. He is simply the greatest practitioner of democratic statesmanship that America and the world have yet produced.

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A Class War

By Victor Davis Hanson

How the Civil War squashed aristocracy in America

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General William Tecumseh Sherman—a quirky, difficult, and much misunderstood man—deserves a place on the roll call of great liberators in human history. More than any other person, he destroyed the institution of American slavery and the Southern aristocracy that was interwoven with it. In the late fall of 1864 he marched an army of over 60,000 rural, voting Americans—mostly farmers from the Midwest—into the heart of the Confederacy, a patrician society based on bound labor. Sherman's agrarian citizen-soldiers upended that world of slaves and masters, instantly liberated tens of thousands, and helped therein to destroy forever the idea of privileged nobility in America. In a 300-mile march covering less than 40 days these armed men changed the entire psychological and material course of our national history.

Make no mistake about it—Sherman waged total war. After taking and burning the city of Atlanta, he set off across the heart of Georgia on his way to the Atlantic coast. Moving without an unwieldy supply chain, his men lived off the land. Earlier Northern battlefield successes had neither destroyed Southern morale nor dented the Confederacy's ability to field new armies. Union

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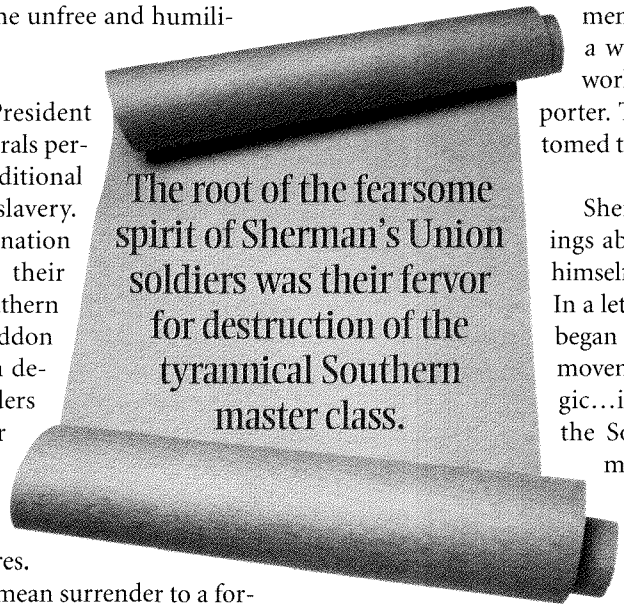
forces had gotten to within a few miles of the Confederate capital in Richmond yet the South had not sued for peace and did not, in fact, feel it was beaten.

This army, however, was aimed at the heartland of the Southern aristocrats—their land and slaves—and left them impotent and discredited before their helpless women and children. Facing little opposition once they left Atlanta, Sherman's men destroyed the very infrastructure that supported slavery and upheld the slaveholding elites—plantations, communications, factories, and government facilities. Southern military officers put great capital in the idea of the sanctity of the Southern homeland. They deemed themselves great raiders and marauders, who harassed fixed garrisons and terrorized timid populations. Sherman, however, gave the Confederacy the raid of its life. The central objective could be summed up quite simply: Freeing the unfree and humiliating the arrogant.

As the war dragged on, President Lincoln and his Union generals persisted in the idea of unconditional surrender and with it the end of slavery. Facing the specter of an egalitarian nation where race and class would lose their power to command, recalcitrant Southern elites dug in deeper for their Armageddon of 1864. There was no tomorrow in defeat, so the entry of Northern invaders created an understandable panic over the end to an entire way of a century-old existence. Many Southerners lived far removed from the mainstream of North American mores. Defeat, the planters believed, would mean surrender to a foreign culture antithetical to their existing hierarchies. It would wash away status gained at birth, and allow neutral, heartless markets to govern the opportunity of all citizens. Success and status would be found solely in profit, not in inherited reputation. An all-powerful and distant federal government, not local oligarchic councils, would to a far greater degree dictate how money was raised and spent.



Sherman's men delivered much of what the South feared: not only because they were ordered to, but because gradually they became driven, by an ideological furor, to destroy the nature of Southern aristocracy. At the outset, the Midwesterners Sherman led really knew almost nothing about slavery or slaves. Indeed, most Northerners had never seen a Negro or a plantation; many were, in the abstract, racists. But once Sherman's men observed the conditions in which slaves were kept unfree, and the ideology and venom of the so-called master class, there arose among these small farmers from the mid-American frontier a powerful repulsion. Very quickly, Sherman's young troops came to abhor the rich Georgians they overran. A soldier from Illinois was only too happy to burn Atlanta; it "and every other Southern city deserve nothing better than general destruction," he wrote, for "buying and selling" other human beings.

Enlisted men talked agitatedly of the exploitation they saw, and their officers nodded in agreement. Given that almost all the regimental commanders of Sherman's forces had been promoted from within the army, and that almost 50 percent of the army's captains and 90 percent of its lieutenants had also served as enlisted men, there was an unmatched familiarity between officer and soldier—and thus a deep populism embedded in the ranks. A Southern witness in the Carolinas wrote of the unanimity of spirit and cause within Sherman's army:

> The officers and men are on terms of perfect equality socially. Off duty they drink together, go arm in arm about the town, call each other by the first name, in a way that startles.... A friend heard a private familiarly addressing a Brigadier General as "Jake." Miss Lee saw another General taking hold with his men to help move a lot of barrels on a wharf. He took off his coat and worked three hours, like a common porter. This seems strange to us, accustomed to the aristocratic system.

Sherman—despite his occasional railings about the dangers of the mob—was himself a man of strong populist impulses. In a letter to Washington shortly before he began his march, Sherman wrote that "this movement is not purely military or strategic...it will illustrate the vulnerability of the South. They don't know what war means, but when the rich planters of Oconee and Savannah see their fences and corn and hogs and sheep vanish before their eyes they will have something more than a mean opinion of the 'Yanks.'"

It cannot be emphasized enough that the society Sherman's men found was the polar opposite of the rural Western towns from which they came. True, the slave owners so overrepresented among the South's military and political leaders were not truly characteristic of Southern society. For example, there may have been only 10,000 or so really large slaveholders in the South. About 75 percent of the South's white population had never had any connection with African chattels at all. Only 385,000 out of some 6 million citizens who lived in the Confederacy or border areas sympathetic to the South were themselves currently slave owners. Nevertheless, morally, economically, ideologically, and culturally, slavery and the aristocratic culture it built were at the center of Southern life, and accepted and supported by most Southerners, especially in the face of Northern criticism.

When Sherman and his soldiers reached Savannah, the symbols of class hierarchy disgusted most of the Northerners. There was, for instance, the "Patrician Church" that reserved middle and front seats for the well-born. "All other persons are invited as cordially to attend and occupy the remaining seats." When Northerner Henry Hitchcock spied Wade Hampton, the millionaire slave-owning Confederate general, at the final armistice between Sherman and Confederate comman-

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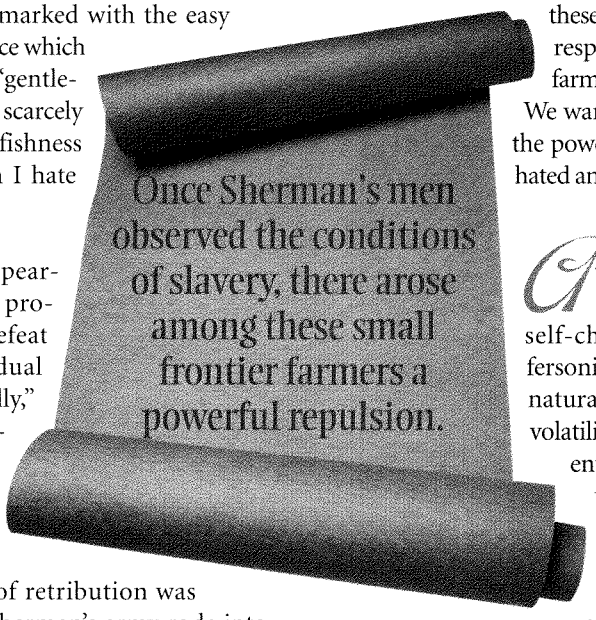
der Joe Johnson he exemplified the loathing Sherman's men felt for the plantationists:

> Hampton's whole demeanor was marked with the easy 'well-bred' essentially vulgar insolence which is characteristic of *that* type of "gentleman"; a man of polished manners, scarcely veiling the arrogance and utter selfishness which marks his class, and which I hate with a perfect hatred.

Sherman's march took on the appearance of an ideological crusade that professed that collective Confederate defeat must be synonymous with individual ruin. Like their 44-year-old "Uncle Billy," the rank and file recruits were convinced that they were in a total war with haughty purveyors of real evil. Sherman's fiery rhetoric and personality had now permeated the entire army. The troops' simmering spirit of retribution was present when the advance guard of Sherman's army rode into Madison, Georgia, in a heavy rain during the morning of November 20, 1864. The town was in the richest part of the state, inhabited by the Confederacy's most successful planters and merchants. Rice Bull of the Union army described Madison as the most beautiful town on the entire march: "The many fine residences were built in the same manner of all the better class of Southern homes, extensive piazzas in front with tall fluted columns reaching almost to the top of the house."

Upon arrival, General Henry Slocum's men quickly looted the stores, burned the courthouse, and torched several of the "better class of Southern homes." Then they demolished the slave pens. Rice Bull editorialized: "We felt that the people of these seemingly prosperous cities were more responsible for the war than those whose farms we had overrun since leaving Atlanta. We wanted to impress on them some idea of the power and magnitude of the Army they so hated and despised."



Among the Southern elite, the system of great cotton plantations based on involuntary labor was self-characterized as a sort of noble Jeffersonian agrarianism. It was passed off as a natural path to creating wealth without the volatility and exploitation of free men inherent in Northern industrial capitalism, or the precarious hardship of Western homesteading. How, other than through the use of ignorant slaves, could Americans farm the vast estates so essential in providing rice, tobacco, and cotton to the republic? These were crops, the Confederate sophistry went, that were grown in the muggy, tropical climate of the Deep South, where the African Negro was naturally at home and could be protected by Christian slave masters.

The pragmatic Sherman scoffed at these paternalistic rationalizations. He demonstrated how much he thought cotton was really worth to the United States when one head of local Confederate forces in South Carolina offered to cease burning cotton if Sherman's men would in turn stop torching estates. Sherman replied: "I

Let Us Die To Make Men Free

By Harvey Rollins and Karina Rollins

The soldiers of the Union army, one bit of conventional wisdom has it, fought strictly to preserve the Union, and were unconcerned with freeing the slaves. A dismayingly large number of people have accepted the fiction that America's ferocious Civil War was fought not over human liberty, but over "states' rights." The rights in question, of course, were to own human beings as property.

So what was the average Union soldier, ready to sacrifice his life in battle, fighting for? One obvious test is to look at what the soldiers did to boost their morale in the wretched moments of wartime. Throughout history, soldiers have sung motivational songs to sustain their spirits, and so it was in the Civil War. The most popular song of the Army of the Potomac throughout the war was "John Brown's Body," an unrefined but fervent tribute to the radical abolitionist who was hanged for his attack on Harper's Ferry. "John Brown died that the slave might be free/But his soul is marching on!" the soldiers shouted out. "Glory, Glory Hallelujah" went the exhilarating chorus.

In 1861, the first year of the war, Julia Ward Howe, wife of Northern abolitionist and journalist S. G. Howe, made her first trip to the nation's capital. While returning from a military review, she observed a procession of soldiers singing the John Brown song. Her friend, the Reverend James Freeman Clarke, suggested she write better words for the tune. Her result, "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" was published in the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1862.

Howe kept the rousing "Glory, Glory Hallelujah" but transformed the anti-slavery message from John Brown's mission to a mission of God: "Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord," she begins. She ends with, "In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea/With a glory in His bosom that transfigures you and me/As He died to make men holy, let us die to make men free/While God is marching on." President Lincoln, upon first hearing the song performed in 1863, had only three words: "Sing it again." It soon became the unofficial anthem of the North. The Union troops, for their part, continued to sing the less poetic but even more explicitly anti-slavery

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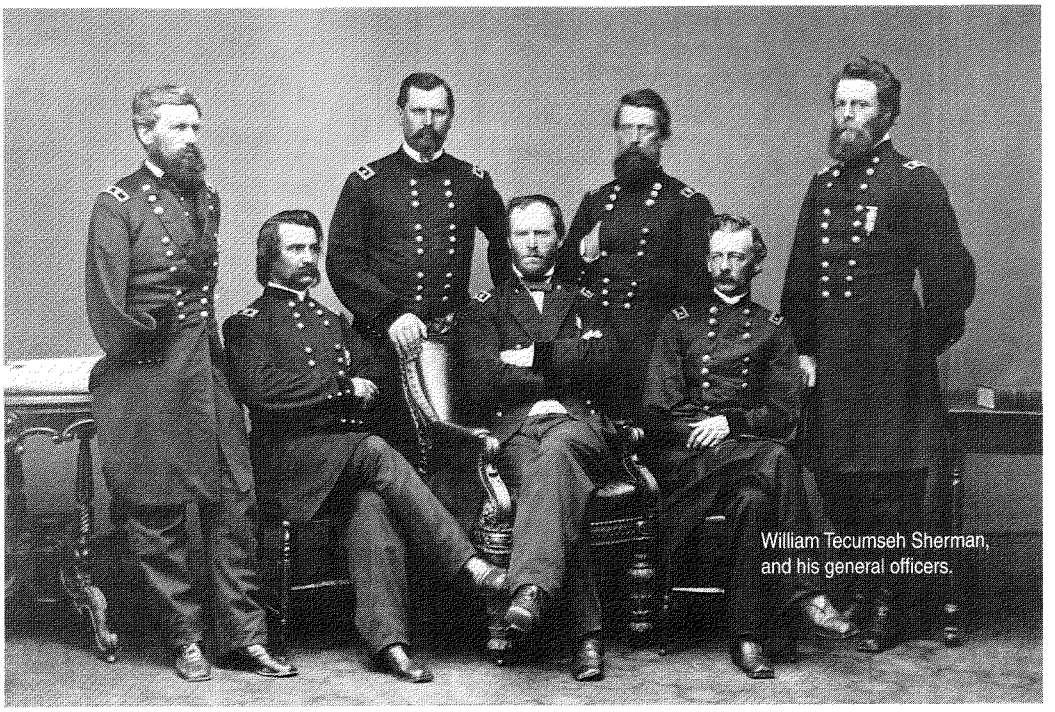
William Tecumseh Sherman, and his general officers.

hope you will burn all the cotton and save us the trouble. We don't want it; it has proven a curse to our country. All you don't burn, I will."

The self-reliant mechanical classes of the North would create more wealth than the Southern elites ever could with their slave pyramids, Sherman concluded. The North had its own farmers (who actually did their own labor), and the South had produced few industries. In a prescient letter to a Southern colleague on the eve of the war, Sherman warned:

> You mistake, too, the people of the North. They are a peaceable people, but an earnest people and will fight too, and they are not going to let this country be destroyed without a mighty effort to save it. Besides, where are your men and appliances of war to contend against them?... The North can make a steam-engine, locomotive or railway car; hardly a yard of cloth or a pair of shoes can you make. You are rushing into war with one of the most powerful, ingeniously mechanical, and determined people on earth—right at your doors. You are bound to fail.

An Illinois soldier in Sherman's army noticed while on the march that Southern train wheels squeaked from lack of oil, glass telegraph insulators seemed in short supply, and rail iron appeared to be of substandard quality. He summed up the omnipresence of such shoddy materials: "In fact, the whole mechanical system of the South was an importation."

The material and cultural impoverishment of the Southern states, together with class distortions that accompanied the institution of slavery, were unmistakable. Southerners thus eventually retorted that they owned slaves for non-economic reasons. "Slavery is the natural and normal condition of society," wrote the Virginia apologist George Fitzhugh. "The situation of

words of "John Brown" as they marched.

The importance of anti-slavery songs in sustaining Union soldiers was appreciated even by Southerners. Just after Lee's surrender in 1865, a Confederate major described hearing Union troops sing "The Battle Cry of Freedom" ("...altho' they may be poor, not a man shall be a slave..."). "I shall never forget the first time I heard it. 'Twas a nasty night...and raining. I was on picket, when some fellow on the other side struck up a song, and others joined in the chorus until it seemed to me the whole Yankee army was singing. I am not naturally superstitious, but I tell you that song sounded like the knell of doom."

During the war, the singing Hutchinson Family toured Union camps and hospitals. Lincoln, like most Northerners, appreciated them greatly, even inviting them to sing at the White House. Among their anti-slavery songs, popular with the troops, was John Greenleaf Whittier's "Hymn of Liberty," with this pull-no-punches condemnation of the South's "domestic institutions": "What gives the wheat fields blades of steel?/What points the rebel cannon?/...What whets the knife for the Union's life?/Hark to the answer: slavery."

When the Hutchinsons sang the John Brown song, they were cheered madly by the soldiers. A private from the 48th Massachusetts wrote home that the soldiers' cheers reflected "a true appreciation of the issues involved; they were receiving an inspiration which would lead them to downright victory...which would leave of slavery nothing but its scars and shame and putrid corpse."

This was one cry among many. "Letters of Union soldiers," records historian Victor Davis Hanson in *The Soul of Battle*, "show that by 1864 a majority clearly knew that their cause was about freeing slaves and they heartily approved of it. Such sentiments grew, rather than diminished, as the war wore on and Northerners entered the South."

One 43-year-old Michigan farmer who had already lost a stepson in the war wrote to his wife from Atlanta in 1864, as part of Sherman's army, that "The more I learn of the cursed institution of slavery, the more I feel willing to endure for its final destruction.... The whole country will undergo a change for the better.... Abolishing slavery will dignify labor.... Let Christians use all their influence to have justice done to the black man." He was killed a short while after.

It's true: The boys in blue were willing to "die to make men free." Glory hallelujah.

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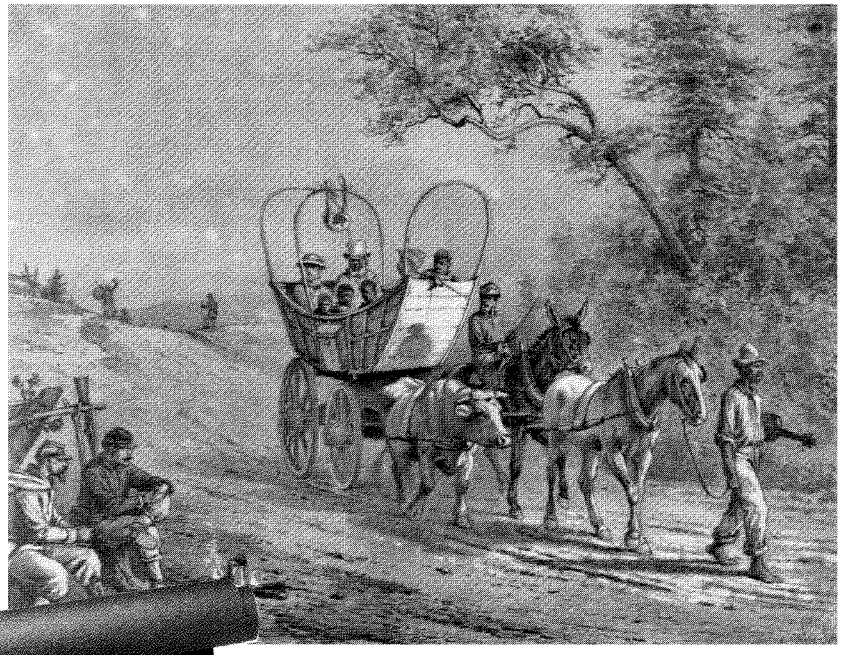
the North is abnormal and anomalous. Capital exercises a more perfect compulsion over free laborers than human masters over slaves; for free laborers must at all times work or starve, and slaves are supported whether they work or not." The South, Fitzhugh argued, was in effect offering a safety net for 4 million residents at the private expense of the planters. Slavery was to be seen as a noble social burden borne by Southern leaders. And so "selfless" plantation owners actually would prove willing to kill other Americans to retain that charitable responsibility.

It is surprising how astute the rank and file of Sherman's army soon were about such Confederate hypocrisy, and how cognizant they were of the effect of their own march against Southern hierarchy. "'Tis the educated class of the South caused all this trouble. The poor unlettered masses, and they constitute almost all the population, have been from time immemorial their dupes and instruments." Another agreed: "Each planter was at the head of a little aristocracy in which hardly a law touched him. This didn't content these people; they wanted 'their rights,' and now they are getting them."

In eerie echoes of Karl Marx, the planters and their apologists argued that capitalism made veritable slaves out of free laborers. Northern workers preserved their rights of citizenship, but in turn wasn't voting a meaningless abstraction? In the twisted logic of the South, Northern wage-earners only *thought* they were free. In reality they were no more in control of their destiny than slaves on plantations who were at least guaranteed food and shelter, and could not be unemployed or deprived of their homes.

The plantation class also embraced the notion of natural slavery. Enslavement of the naturally less gifted by race was beneficial to both master and servant—the former avoided degrading manual labor, and could devote ensuing leisure time to the arts, politics, and war for the benefit of the state; while the latter was relieved of worry over future sustenance, and steered into the mindless work for which—by nature—he was most fit and happy. Slave owners were indeed subject to an array of customs and protocols designed to protect the slaves' welfare. (These guidelines were, of course, not always followed.) That way, the entire hierarchy in the South could hum as one well-oiled machine, the interconnected cogs of slaves and poor whites being managed by a few all-knowing plantation princes.

Such was the society and all of its pretenses that were utterly destroyed by the Midwestern invaders. The South's slaves proved eager to be free, and willing not just to leave but to fight for their liberation. By the end of his march about 25,000 blacks had followed Sherman—often to the chagrin of the general who worried how they were to be fed and clothed with their families in addition to his troops while on the move. The Union army's embrace of the slaves, their angry shooting of the bloodhounds used to track escapees, their physical destruction of the plantation infrastructure, their psychological humiliation of the plantation class—all this helped to shatter both the material and psychological foundations of an oppressive aristocratic state that could not be reconstituted again.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The symbols of class hierarchy disgusted most of the Midwesterners.

Historians operating with the modernist assumption that idealism is only a veneer for self-interest, that war is always amoral rather than on occasion utilitarian, and uncomfortable with absolute notions of good and evil, have downplayed the actions of Sherman's soldiers as political avenging angels. But the root of the fearsome spirit and success of Sherman's Union soldiers in Georgia was their collective fervor for emancipation and destruction of the tyrannical Southern ruling class. Sherman and his Midwestern farmer-fighters had a keen appreciation that the landed lords of the South, for all their proclamations about states' rights and the preservation of liberty as envisioned by the Founding Fathers, had championed secession mostly to preserve and expand their own vast estates and multitudes of slaves. Property and position, not ideas, were the ultimate issue of this war. This Sherman, almost alone of Northern generals, understood.

After Sherman's march through Georgia and the Carolinas, every child of the South knew that the will of the Confederate people, as well as their army, had been crushed. Yet, Sherman killed very few, and with genuine reluctance. Rapes during the march were almost unknown. But he and his men were harshly unkind to the elitists running the Southern plantations. In the process, these soldiers did more than any abolitionist or liberator ever born in our country to guarantee the American proposition that each man is as good as another.

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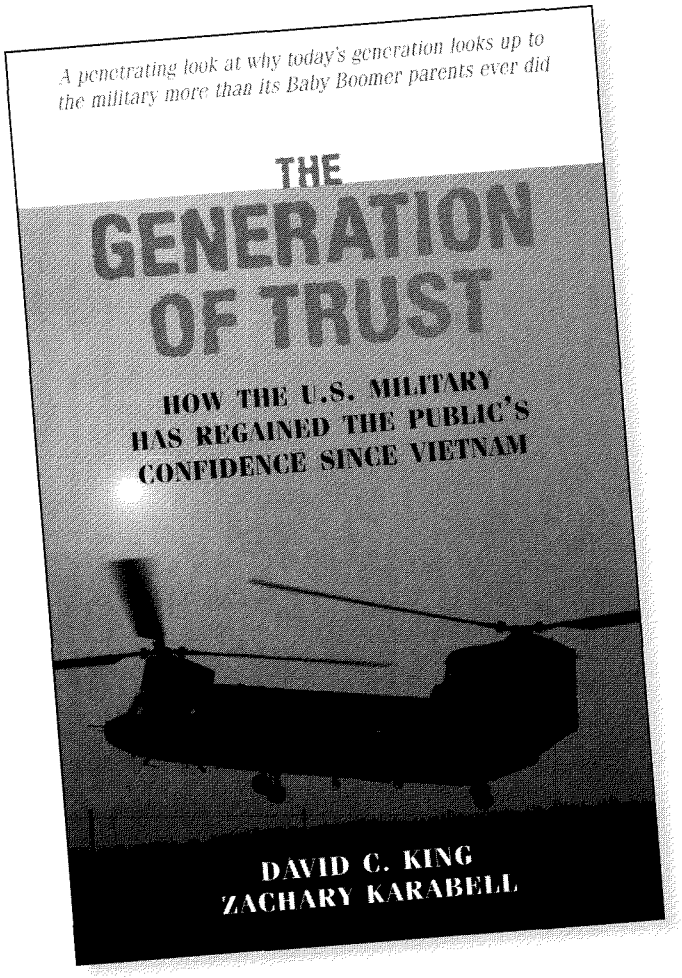

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Living History

For millions of Americans, the era of Lee and Lincoln is still open for visiting

Karl Zinsmeister

Time Travelers

By Eli Lehrer

Skip Coonts, a tall, gaunt man with a neatly trimmed gray beard, spends the work week installing windows and storefronts in the suburbs of Washington, D.C. But this occupation is little more than a means to make money and pass time between Civil War re-enactments. "My job," he says, "is just a way of paying for the stuff I really want to do—which is to understand the war and the life of the Confederate soldier." Although he's modern enough to have an e-mail address, Coonts admits he sometimes wishes he lived in the 1860s: He prefers open windows to air conditioning, and walking to driving. He can also go on non-stop for 15 minutes on the history of uniform fabrics, and the ways that Civil War soldiers kept brass buttons shiny. Given the chance, he'll quote long stretches of war letters from memory, and wax on about minor skirmishes. Skip Coonts lives for the Civil War.

Almost 140 years after Lee surrendered at Appomattox, the

Eli Lehrer is a TAE *senior editor.*

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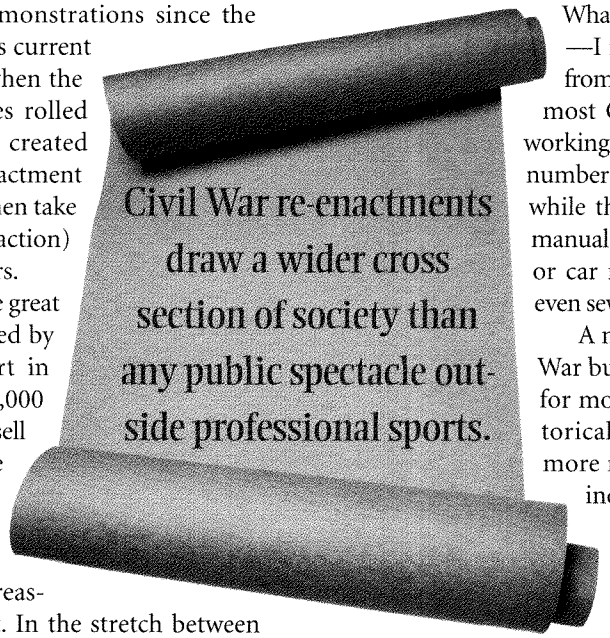
events and culture of the Civil War remain alive. A vast, thriving subculture of living historians re-creates the events of America's most deadly war—by studying its history in great detail, then assuming the roles of soldiers, civilians, camp followers, and others who took part in the action. An Illinois tourism study estimated that Americans spend about $1.4 billion a year on living history events related to the Civil War—more than twice the annual revenue of all Broadway plays and musicals. Tourists visiting Civil War sites and attending re-enactments spend another few billion dollars. A re-creation of the Battle of Antietam this past September attracted over 40 corporate sponsors. Replays of major battles have become so elaborate they now draw as many play-acting "soldiers" as fought in the original events.

Given its immense size and popularity, this Civil War hobby is a surprisingly recent development. A few hardy souls have been staging Civil War history demonstrations since the 1960s, but re-enacting didn't enter its current growth phase until the late 1980s, when the 125th anniversaries of many battles rolled around. Promoters and organizers created special events, and men (battle re-enactment remains a male hobby, although women take part in nearly every other part of the action) turned out in unprecedented numbers.

Today, about a million people—the great majority of them married men joined by their wives and children—take part in re-enactments each year. At least 1,000 people, most of them "suttlers" who sell nineteenth-century-style goods to the re-enactors, make a full-time living off of this. While most people get involved at the urging of friends and spouses, Civil War aficionados increasingly hook up through the Internet. In the stretch between Florida and Pennsylvania that saw most of the war's fighting, at least two major re-enactments take place each weekend from early April to late October. Although the re-enactments are most popular along the Eastern seaboard and the former Confederate states, groups in Iowa, Illinois, and even California have sprung up.



Most often, re-enactors wear uniforms or appropriate civilian garb and camp out in nineteenth-century style, but rarely assume alien personas except when they're actually taking part in a battle. Even then, they rarely imitate particular individuals. Around the firepits, one is much likelier to hear conversations about new car models, Internet sites, NASCAR racing, World War II history, and football draft picks than curses at Abe Lincoln or Jeff Davis.

Commitment to authenticity varies: Most re-enactors wear uniforms and dresses made from Civil War-style fabrics that are now for sale for the first time in over 100 years. But many use modern sleeping bags and waterproof tents. A few even bring along portable phones or laptops. (They are called profane names by hardcores like Coonts, who sleep without tents even when it rains.) Most re-enactments allow non-participating family members and curious tourists to wander through the otherwise authentic-looking campsites and battlefields—where they look like time travelers with their drip-dry clothing and camcorders.

While most gatherings center around battle re-creations, the pastime has almost infinite variations. Weapons enthusiasts hold target shooting contests using black-powder weapons. Clothing buffs (almost entirely female) organize Civil War-era fashion shows. Christian practitioners hold camp meetings and use them as a way to spread the Gospel. Many get involved in battlefield preservation, or political issues stemming from the war. Although methodical counts are impossible to come by, veteran re-enactors estimate that a majority of the hobbyists focus on Confederate units, although most serious re-enactors play both sides.

Journalist Tony Horwitz has observed that Civil War re-enactments draw a wider cross section of society than any public spectacle outside professional sports. Yet there are certain similarities that the re-enactors tend to share. Whatever their professions or income levels—I met participants who did everything from wait tables to perform heart surgery—most Civil War re-enactors seem to enjoy working with their hands. A disproportionate number are skilled craftsman and assemblers, while those in other careers often pursue a manual hobby such as woodworking, cooking, or car repair. Great numbers of these men even sew their own nineteenth-century garb.

A number of financially successful Civil War buffs I met had left well-paying careers for more physical labor linked to their historical interests. "I could have made a lot more money had I stayed in the high tech industry," says Bill Taylor, a well-known Union re-enactor who worked as vice president of marketing in a D.C.-area technology firm. "But I wanted to get out and do something real." As an adjunct to his Civil War hobby (an obsession, he admits), Taylor is one of the handful of Americans who currently works full-time as a farrier—shoeing horses and taking care of their hooves.

Civil War re-enactors overwhelmingly tend to have families with children. While few babies show up at re-enactments, the quest for authenticity has created important roles for children as young as 6 and 7. The drummer boys and fifers who lead most companies into battle are almost always the children of re-enactors. "The drummer was actually paid more than a private, because, well, he had more training," notes Don Hubbard, a Confederate re-enactor who runs a field music school each summer. Most boys (and a small but growing number of girls) join the fighting ranks in their mid-teens, as soon as they are old enough to handle weapons. (Yes, they actually fire cartridges—full of gunpowder, but no ball.)

While the major battles draw the most spectators—as many as 30,000 onlookers—many hobbyists prefer smaller local events that focus on camp life, military drills, music, and other minutiae of daily life. At one typical event I attended, the actual "fighting" took up only three hours during the weekend. And people rarely "die" before combat reaches very close quarters, in order to allow participants to be part of the action as long as possible.

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Even as the deep rifts over race and regional identity that sparked the Civil War retreat further from the political stage, the importance of the War Between the States within the imagination of Americans seems to be growing ever greater. Some historical events (such as the Spanish-American War) affected the lives of many people at the time, but have little emotional resonance today. Others, like the sinking of the *Titanic*, touched relatively few lives directly but remain vivid in the national memory, because they signal significant changes in attitudes or morality. Events like the Civil War retain cultural and emotional significance on many fronts. Nearly every extended family had some participant or victim, and the mobilizations in North and South changed daily life forever. After the war, national identity gradually overtook many aspects of local and state identity; people began speaking of themselves as citizens of the United States before their particular state. The vast, continental, super-powerful United States of America began to grow the day after Lee's surrender.

The re-enactors I interviewed express a strong desire to recapture the mores and feelings of an earlier American era. Many admire the personal character of that period's most prominent figures. Re-enactors tend to celebrate the chivalric notions of combat and warfare that many Civil War soldiers adhered to. But few want to re-live the war's conflicts, or engage its politics.

Re-enactors celebrate the chivalric notions of warfare that many Civil War soldiers adhered to.

Karl Zinsmeister

The photographs in this article were taken at the 140th anniversary re-enactment of the Battle of Antietam, staged in Maryland in September 2002.

Atlantan John Twitchell first became involved in gatherings as a result of his interest in black-powder weapons. As a Southerner, he has always played a member of a Confederate unit. "It's part of living where I do. If I lived in Massachusetts, I would join a Federal unit," he explains. Twitchell, however, has no sympathy for the Confederate cause. In fact, a heroic portrait of Sherman burning Atlanta (an event some Southerners still feel bitter about) hangs over his fireplace. "I'm glad that the North won the war. I couldn't imagine life any other way," he says. "At the same time, there are some things—the sense of local patriotism, of how you fight in a war—which we've lost and I'd like to understand better."

One part of the appeal for Twitchell is that he likes to put himself in a very different set of shoes. Many others likewise enjoy experimenting in different roles. Nanci Ebersoll, who accompanies her husband to re-enactments and enthusiastically participates in cooking and other camp tasks, finds these to be stimulating escapes. "If they didn't have it in the Civil War, we don't have it. It's a perfect vacation," she reports. "It's like time travel. There are no phones, no television." Others, particularly those who have served in the armed services, like the way that Civil War re-enactors informally create military-style camaraderie. "Don't tell my wife, but these guys are my real family," one man smiled at me.

Of course, not every re-enactor participates in this non-ideological way. Maryland resident John Krausse, a Civil War buff who is a member of the 14th Tennessee regiment along with Coonts, sees the struggle in overtly political terms. As fights over the Confederate battle flag have raged in recent years, Krausse became one of the most vigorous defenders of the Southern Cross, and the focus of a History Channel documentary examining the flag debate through the eyes of re-enactors.

The documentary, entitled "The Unfinished Civil War," portrays white re-enactors and other defenders of the Southern cause as racially motivated bigots. Krausse, a golf course manager, says that he's "proud as a bull rooster to be a Southern man," and given half a chance he goes on at length about the distinctiveness of Southern culture, the crimes of Abraham Lincoln, and the gallant deeds of Southern enlisted men. Yet, while he denies that slavery had much to do with the war, he derides segregation as "stupid and insulting." But Krausse has actually moved away from re-enactments because he considers the political aspects of the conflict more important. Joseph McGill, a black re-enactor from Iowa who serves as Krausse's antagonist in the documentary, says that he considers himself a friend, and doesn't believe that Krausse is a racist.

A few (like a man I met who sketched the involvement of a worldwide Jewish/black conspiracy in the Civil War) clearly are bigots. The overwhelming majority, though, are too busy researching the minute details of military campaigns and enjoying the simple sociability of camp life to bother with racism. The pleasures and human qualities of the earlier period, not its thorny political issues, are what engage them. Even Union re-enactors are reluctant to discuss hard issues like slavery.

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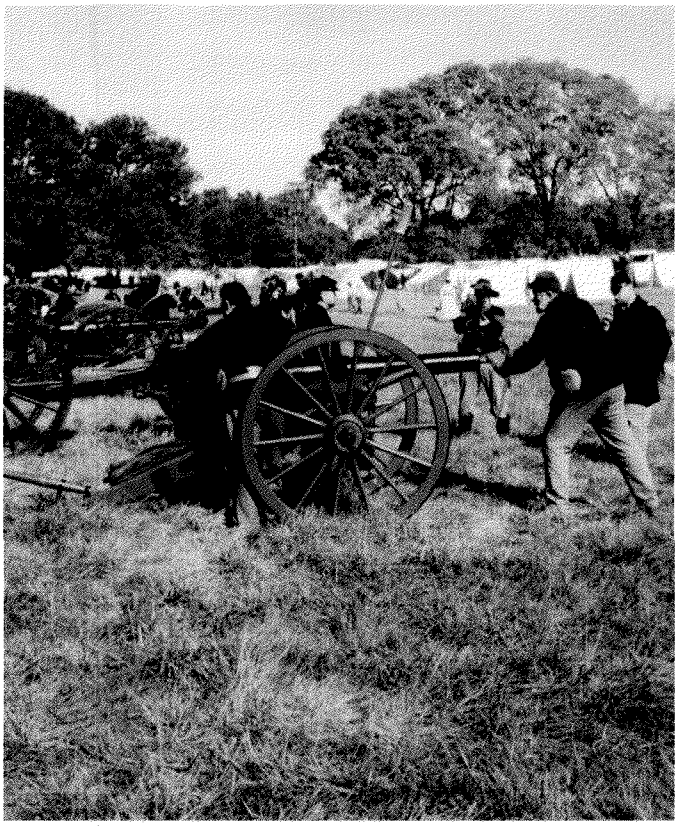
The majority of serious re-enactors "galvanize," or don the uniform of the opposite side whenever the peculiarities of a given recreation demand it. During an event in Waynesboro, Pennsylvania, the group camped next to the 14th Tennessee, the 28th Massachusetts, sang Confederate fight songs and, in animated moments, cursed the Yankees. Unit members have a tradition of "playing Confederate" every year at this event, though most of them told me they actually disdain the Southern cause.

"I'm a Southerner, and it's my preference to play that role," says Texas A&M student and sometime re-enactor Andrew Gray. "But a lot of the historical interest, for me, comes when I can sit in the other guys' place and look at it from their side. It's how you really get to understand the war."

The ability to live vicariously a different life for a brief period seems a major attraction. "I've always been fascinated with military history," says Susan Geis, who takes part in battles as a male Union private. "The fact that I'm playing a man is, in many ways, the least of the changes that I'm making in my life."

In the end, Civil War re-enacting has little to do with politics. Modern politics in particular seems far from the minds of most of these Americans. One man who lectured me on the details of the battle of Gettysburg and then launched into a learned debate over military strategy in Vietnam had to strain to remember the name of Secretary of State Colin Powell. For most of these men and women, the hobby is an educational escape into history—a way to envision themselves in the midst of the greatest struggle in America's history.


Karl Zinsmeister

Multiple artillery pieces are actually fired, dozens of times, by re-enactors—with tremendous noise and some real danger.

A Direct Route Into History's Heart

By Mark Hemingway

"You cannot have an army without music," General Robert E. Lee once remarked. And by the musical standard, Lee and Grant commanded some of the greatest armies in history. More than 4,000 songs were produced during America's Civil War—a treasure trove of sentiment and insight into one of our nation's most critical periods. And among the thousands of history buffs and hundreds of historical societies devoted to the Civil War, no one alive understands this body of musical inspiration better than Robert "Bobby" Horton.

From his home in his native Birmingham, Alabama, Horton has made his work familiar to millions of Americans, even if his name isn't. For nearly a decade now, Horton has been doing soundtrack work for Ken Burns, America's unofficial Film Documentarian Laureate. If you've seen installments of Burns' *The Civil War*, *Mark Twain*, or *Baseball*, you've heard Horton's musical creations and re-creations. And in the close-knit world of Civil War buffs, Horton's reputation as a historian eclipses even his reputation as a musician. He is the undisputed expert on music of the period.

Of course, the bearded and bespectacled Horton dismisses this accomplishment out of hand. He is the consummate Southern gentleman whose humility exceeds even his enthusiasm for his subject. Pressed to disclose how many instruments he plays, Horton insists "I don't really play piano well enough to play in front of anybody… I'm no good with woodwinds"—before finally admitting to being proficient with about 60 instruments, including most horns and "basically anything with strings." I learn that he's been up since 6:30 on the morning I interviewed him, trying to learn to play Vivaldi's "Four Seasons" on his violin.

If one of the last acceptable stereotypes in America is that of the illiterate Southern redneck, this self-educated renaissance man is doing his part to lay that misconception to rest. His drawl transmits manic bursts of information, and fascinating anecdotes, punctuated with enough easy laughter and family stories to let the listener catch up. He recalls a day some years ago when he invited his parents to listen to him lecture on Civil War music at a local university. His father, approached for his opinion of the presentation, offered a decidedly back-handed compliment, according to Horton: "Well, you sure are good at *talkin'*."

Horton senior, a World War II veteran, helped pique Bobby's family pride and interest in history from a very early age. The Civil War centennial, source of a flurry of nationwide celebrations, occurred when Bobby turned nine. He was hooked when he learned that dozens of his ancestors had fought in the war—most for the Confederacy, but one Irish immigrant in a Union artillery company from New York. Ever since, Bobby has devoured Civil War books, passed time as a Civil War re-enactor, and taken an active part in organizations like the Sons of Confederate Veterans.

About the same time he was getting interested in the War

Mark Hemingway, a Phillips Foundation prize winner, is writing a book on the anti-globalization protest movement.

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Between the States, Horton picked up his father's old trumpet. He learned a few banjo licks from his grandfather. By the time he was 14, Bobby was recording music in studios. He worked his way through college in a music store, graduated with an accounting degree, and spent six years working at an insurance company before his bluegrass and comedy trio *Three on a String* took off, allowing him to make music full time.

It wasn't until he was 33 years old that Horton's two loves came together. He'd picked up a job doing the soundtrack to a film, *Shadow Waltz*, about an Indiana farm widow who takes in an injured traveling salesman, only to learn that he's a Confederate spy. He hit upon the idea of recording traditional Civil War-era songs for the soundtrack. The trouble was, beyond "Dixie" and a few other standards he couldn't find much in the way of authentic recordings. There was an odd record from the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. And an album of songs by Tennessee Ernie Ford—but they were backed by a jazz combo, which hardly made the songs feel genuine.

So Horton trekked to his local library. In much of the South, local custom dictated that every bit of Civil War arcana be meticulously catalogued. Sure enough, in his local Southern History Room Horton unearthed hundreds of pages of sheet music.

In much of the South, local custom dictated that every bit of Civil War arcana be meticulously catalogued.

Horton wasn't really surprised to find such riches. "Back then, creative people had few outlets. Songwriting was one of them. Since the only way to make money was selling sheet music, common people had to be able to sing your melody. It had to be simple and hummable."

Horton soon realized he had more than some tunes. When these songs were lost, many of the stories that went with them were too. Even the beloved anthem of the South, "Dixie" had a hidden history. Few people knew that it was written by a northerner from Ohio—with original lyrics about a deceitful woman. There's even speculation that the author of "Dixie" stole the melody from a free black family that lived nearby. The song eventually became Abraham Lincoln's favorite tune. He even requested that a Union army band play it for him during one Presidential concert.

Horton soon found that studying its music deepened his understanding of the Civil War. "The songs reflect the realities of the period. If you know the war and the circumstances, you can look at the lyrics and pretty much tell when the song was written. Through the mood of the song, what the song tells you, the sadness—that sort of thing—you can follow the fight. As the battles go on, the music gets sadder and more realistic."

Horton believes that through the marching tunes and melancholy dirges, history can be resurrected with an immediacy and precision not possible in books. "If you don't feel affection for those who laid history out, you won't understand it," he says. And music is a direct route into the hearts of history's makers.

Horton didn't want to record the songs unless he could be true to them. He acquired some nineteenth-century instruments, consulted early string-band recordings, and then every night—after his young son was sound asleep—began arranging and capturing the tunes on an old four-track recorder, playing all the instruments himself.

He began giving out and selling cassettes. He made the covers himself, based on designs from antique sheet music. His liner notes gave brief historical sketches of each song.

Before he knew it, retailers were calling, and the endeavor snowballed into a full-time enterprise. To date, Horton has produced six volumes of music from the Confederacy and four volumes of Union songs. He's built his own distribution network from the ground up, and his music is available everywhere from Civil War battlefields to gift shops in Europe. Ask him how many cassettes and CDs he's sold and he turns humble again—"Well, in the hundreds of thousands…"—a staggering figure for a musician who started out shipping cassettes from his dining room.

Listen to Horton's rendition of "The Battle of Shiloh Hill," and his success begins to make sense. Horton knows that the lyrics (of dying soldiers crying out to God to protect their wives and children) were written by M. B. Smith, a member of the 2nd Texas Volunteer Infantry who actually witnessed the two days of bloody fighting in which 23,000 men died. Horton's fiddle weeps and drones. His voice bears the full import of his knowledge of the details of this titanic clash. It's this intangible feel for the music that is Horton's true genius. A lot of people could pick up a banjo or guitar and work their way through the song's simple progressions, but according to Ken Burns, "I don't think I've met anyone quite like Bobby who has the ability to understand the soul of American music."

Burns considers music to be of the utmost importance in his documentaries—largely defining the feel of the films. Sequencing still photographs to music gives a rhythmic feel to his narratives. That's why Burns often selects the music for a particular segment even before filming begins, letting the tune determine the tone of the storytelling. A haunting, plaintive acoustic guitar arrangement of *Dixie* that Horton recorded became one of Burns's signatures. The song flowed directly from Horton's heart: "I got to thinking about all those young boys who died, and it just came out of me."

In addition to spending a lot of time in his home studio, Horton tours with his bluegrass band, and gives popular concert lectures to groups ranging from history professors to riverboat cruisers. He also spends a lot of time performing, as a volunteer, in schools. When he's done playing the songs, he urges the students to be proud of their families, their heritage, their country. And he draws their attention to their opportunities. "I tell the kids we live in land where they can do anything. I'm one proof of that."

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Flashback

To know nothing of what happened before you were born is to remain ever a child—Cicero

Man Without a Country

As we walk down a rutted dirt road leading into the historic Batavia Cemetery in New York on its annual Civil War candlelight tour, we halt before a somber man seated at a desk. He wears no uniform; he carries no gun. He is Ohio Congressman Clement L. Vallandigham, who claims to be imprisoned in a "military bastille for no other offense than my political opinions."

If most visitors have never heard of Clement Vallandigham, Dick Crozier (a Republican who has played the Democratic dissenter in re-enactments for five years) gives them something to think about. "I state that someday, decisions will be made not by local people but by politicians in distant Washington. People look at me and say, 'Oh, that's where it happened—that's how we ended up with this omnipotent government.'"

Clement Vallandigham was the lawyerly son of a Presbyterian minister. A conventional Democrat of states' rights sympathies and devotee of Edmund Burke, he was a friend neither to slavery ("a moral, social, and political evil") nor to the Negro. Like Lincoln, Vallandigham reverenced "the Union," though he wished to preserve it by conciliation (Republicans said "appeasement") rather than bloodshed.

In February 1861, one month before Lincoln took office, Rep. Vallandigham proposed amending the Constitution so as to divide the country into four sections—North, West, Pacific, and South. Presidents could be elected and controversial legislation enacted only by gaining a majority of votes from all sections.

Vallandigham's plan died aborning; war came. But whereas the leader of the Midwestern Democrats, Stephen Douglas, fell in behind Lincoln, Vallandigham became the most outspoken antiwar voice in Congress.

The whiskers had barely curled on the President's new beard before Vallandigham was charging him with having launched "a terrible and bloody revolution" whose features were death, taxes, a swollen executive branch, and the erosion of personal liberties.

Threats and imprecations rained down on Vallandigham's head. Branded a traitor, a rival in odium to Benedict Arnold and Aaron Burr, he stood his ground. As his biographer Frank Klement writes, the congressman "was not one to be intimidated or bow to pressure. The insults hurled his way...only made him more defiant."

After losing his re-election bid in a gerrymandered district, Vallandigham returned to Dayton. His timing was atrocious. General Ambrose Burnside had just been demoted from commander of the Army of the Potomac to commander of the Department of the Ohio. Smarting from the humiliation, Burnside declared that war critics in his jurisdiction would be arrested and tried in military courts.

On May 1, 1863, Vallandigham publicly denounced the "wicked and cruel" war by which "King Lincoln" was "crushing out liberty and erecting a despotism." As if to prove the speaker's point, General Burnside ordered the orator arrested on charges of disloyalty.

A hastily assembled military tribunal found Vallandigham guilty. President Lincoln ordered him exiled to the Confederacy, despite Vallandigham's protest that he was a loyal "citizen of Ohio and of the United States...banished from my country for no other offense than love of Constitutional liberty." As a staunch Union man, Vallandigham was unwelcome in the secessionist South, so Confederate blockade-runners smuggled him into Canada.

Despite his Canadian residency, the Ohio Democratic party gave "Valiant Val" its 1863 nomination for governor. The exile's electoral fate was sealed by Union victories at Gettysburg and Vicksburg, which deflated the peace movement.

Lonely for Ohio and the shouts of the crowd, Vallandigham returned to Dayton amidst great fanfare in the summer of 1864, almost daring the military authorities to arrest him. They ignored him, trusting that historians would succeed where Burnside had not.

History came through. Vallandigham rates barely a footnote today; he is remembered, if at all, as the inspiration for Edward Everett Hale's short story "The Man Without a Country."

Vallandigham died in 1871 in a bizarre legal mishap. Defending an accused murderer, he was demonstrating to a room of lawyers how the deceased had accidentally shot himself. The demonstration went too well. Vallandigham picked up a pistol he believed to be bullet-less, pulled the trigger, exclaimed, "My God, I've shot myself!" and that was the end of Valiant Val.

—Bill Kauffman

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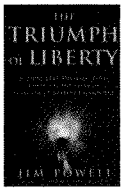

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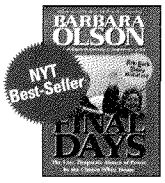

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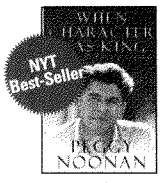

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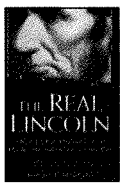

The Real Lincoln—Though Abraham Lincoln will forever be remembered for freeing the slaves, that was never one of his chief political aims. What was? According to Thomas DiLorenzo, Lincoln devoted his entire political career to revolutionizing the American form of government from one that was very limited in scope and highly decentralized to a highly centralized, activist state. **Item # 5958**

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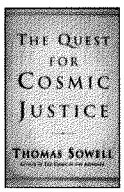

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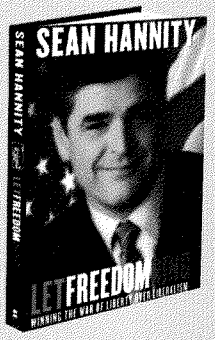

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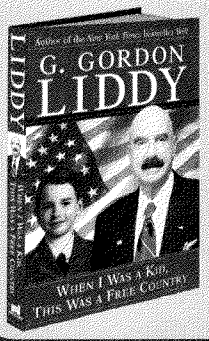

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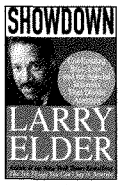

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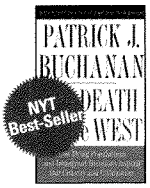

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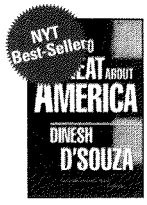

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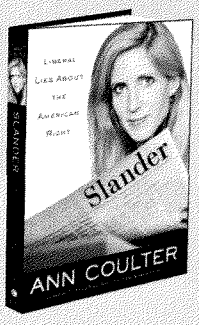

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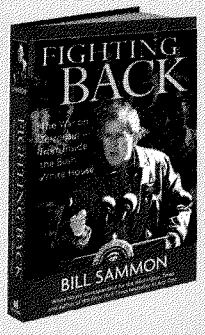

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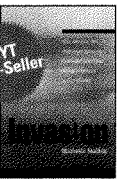

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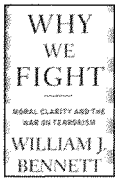

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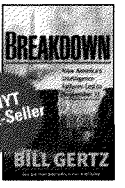

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Transcript

Words worth repeating

Conservatism & Liberality: Michael Oakeshott's Quirky Fusion

From a Bradley lecture delivered recently at the American Enterprise Institute by writer and former New Republic *editor Andrew Sullivan:*

The name Michael Oakeshott (1901-1990) instills dread in many American conservatives. They recognize him as one of the most important contemporary political philosophers, and feel they should have read him, but most haven't. Or if they have read him, it's only a smattering. So they nod knowingly when you bring up his name, but don't know quite what to think of him.

For Oakeshott, conservatism was fundamentally about the skeptical temperament. His conservatism wasn't based on the notion that there are certain rights of man that we can know for sure, let alone truths that are self-evident. It wasn't based on the fact that a free society generates more wealth or power. It was based simply on the notion that there are limits to human understanding.

As an empirical matter, as a practical matter, human beings do not know the consequence of their actions. They cannot see the future. Their information, based on what has happened in the past, is extremely limited. We operate constantly in a fog—a mental, intellectual, psychological fog. This is our reality.

This fog extends not simply to abstract conceptions of what is true or not, but into practical matters as well. How do we know that what we're going to do will produce the results we want? How do we know that a certain policy is going to bring about the consequences it is designed to bring about? How do we know, when we start a war, how that war will end?

The best rationale for a small government, therefore, is something simpler than the arguments most conservatives traditionally rely on. It is based on the lack of knowledge of any group of people in knowing what on earth they are doing. Keep the government small so it can do as little damage as possible. Whenever certainty arises in public debate, question it, suspect it, doubt it. And alongside this, have a form of government, a form of statesmanship, of politicking, which deeply understands the limits of its own knowledge, which moves forward with a sense of judgment, not certainty; by prudence, not conviction.

Courtesy of The Michael Oakeshott Association/www.michael-oakeshott-association.org

When you look at the United States, you see a rather successful attempt to instill this notion in the state. The U.S. Constitution is designed to create permanent restraint on any group or any notion that seeks to impose the truth on the rest of us. But government itself, even in nonconstitutional societies like the United Kingdom, where the law of the land is whatever anybody decides it is at any particular moment, the practice of government is still an exercise in restraint, prudence, caution, doubt.

Here is Oakeshott's own description of exactly what this kind of politics is about: "Into the heat of our engagements, into the passionate clash of beliefs, into our enthusiasm for saving the souls of our neighbors or of all mankind, a government of this sort injects…the irony that is prepared to counteract one vice by another…the raillery that deflates extravagance… inertia, and skepticism." Oakeshott warns that "the conjunction of dreaming and ruling generates tyranny."

Perhaps it's understandable that this doctrine hasn't really taken root in America, a place where dreams are constantly remade. But of course, Oakeshott's point was precisely that those dreams in the populace at large, the restlessness and vibrancy and enthusiasms and zeal of Americans in general, require above all the temper and restraint of cool prudence and limits in government. The two go together.

Notice Oakeshott's ability to embrace contradictions. A society can be full of dreams, but its government shouldn't be. In fact, it is government's avoidance of dreams that allows its people to dream even more ambitiously in their own personal lives.

In his famous metaphor, Oakeshott described politics this way: "In political activity, men sail a boundless and bottomless sea. There is neither harbor for shelter nor floor for anchorage, neither

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starting place nor appointed destination. The enterprise is to keep afloat on an even keel. The sea is both friend and enemy, and the seamanship consists in using the resources of a traditional manner of behavior in order to make a friend of every hostile occasion."

Note that last phrase—"a traditional manner of behavior." Many people unfamiliar with Oakeshott think his argument was simply that tradition is best—do what you've always done, don't rock the boat. But nothing could be further from the truth. The ship sailing into the complete unknown, with no harbor, no sky, no bottom of the sea, is capable of going anywhere at any time—so where does the ship get its guidance?

Here, you have to understand Oakeshott's theory of history. History certainly was not, as far as Oakeshott was concerned, the accretion of tradition which one had to continue indefinitely. He, as far as possible, rejected determinism in all its forms—any notion that society and what happens next is determined by what has gone before.

His key concept here is "contingency," the notion that any human event can produce any other human event, and the freedom or autonomy of individual human beings to make the world anew. Conservatism in this understanding does not seek to suppress change, to dictate the course of a story, insisting on a plot. It recognizes the mixture of tradition and possibility in events.

"So far as I understand it," Oakeshott wrote, "peace is a kind of reconciliation to mortality, a feeling of permanence in transience, either reached after frustration and pain or seized intuitively in youth." He loved the young. He loved their sense of endless possibility. He loved their sense of play. He just thought they should never be allowed anywhere near government.

So, too, I think he would love America's life and vibrancy and urgency, its experiments, its radicalism, its constant churning. He just wouldn't want to see these replicated in government. He said once, "I'm a conservative in government because I'm a radical in every other human activity. The only way in which we maximize the possibilities of human

A society can be full of dreams, but its government shouldn't be.

beings to invent themselves and reinvent themselves, pursue their own ideas and models and desires, is when we make sure the government is strong enough and firm enough to maintain a society which allows such freedom to exist. That requires sobriety, judgment, prudence."

Oakeshott loved Shakespeare. In all the odd and quirky characters—from Falstaff to Bushy, from Benedik to Hamlet and Macbeth—he saw what a free society could create, not in terms of projects or goals or abstractions, but in terms of the human beings that are allowed to flourish with all their idiosyncrasies and faults and character traits.

This was for Oakeshott a wonder to behold. Every person he met was a character, or at least a potential character. And he saw the point of liberal democracy as giving individuals the ability to more fully become themselves, to ripen and mature in all their idiosyncrasies and differences.

All of life, Oakeshott argues, is an adventure. Let's see what I can become. Let's see what I can make of my life. Let's greet life and its difficulties and exigencies and unpredictable nature as an opportunity.

But this disposition, he would argue, should not imply the worship of nonconformity, the devotion to arbitrary so-called self-expression, or a resolution to be different at all costs. The conduct it prompts is not composed of unconditional choices, and it doesn't require indifference to moral or prudential practices, or aversion to all but self-made rules. Nor does this disposition forbid association in a cooperative undertaking, to pursue with others a common purpose. But it requires that every member of the association continuously chooses to be part of it.

And half of this self-understanding is knowing your own limits. Oakeshott will give you this wonderful description of adventure, and then he will kick you in the stomach at the very end with a sentence like, "But the most important thing about knowing who you are is knowing what you're not and what you can't do." There is adventure and joy, but also sobriety. There is enormous complexity in this thought.

It's a beautiful evocation, really, of what liberal society is trying to do. It is trying to allow and encourage and nurture the ability of us all to live our own lives, to take responsibility for them, to take joy in them, to embrace the adventure of them, and to cherish the freedom that makes them possible. He calls for "a modest and unaggressive self-reliance…a man's knowing how to belong to himself, and a preference for being related to others…an aristocratic recognition of one's own unimportance, and a humility devoid of humiliation."

What I think modern conservatives sometimes miss in their legitimate calls for people to live up to certain moral norms is also the joy of character, or personality, of the things that make us love another person. We don't always love someone because he or she is virtuous. We sometimes love people because of their faults. And yet it often takes until the memorial service before we acknowledge this particular reality. Oakeshott looked around at people and saw them as things to be cherished, in contrast to those who would look at human beings and see them as something to be corrected or corralled or instructed or uplifted or informed. This is the real conservative definition of diversity.

We must look at our society not in terms of abstraction, not in terms of slogans, but in terms of the people it produces, in terms of the fantastic energy you see all across this country, an energy combined with self-reliance, and quirkiness. This is the real fruit of the West.

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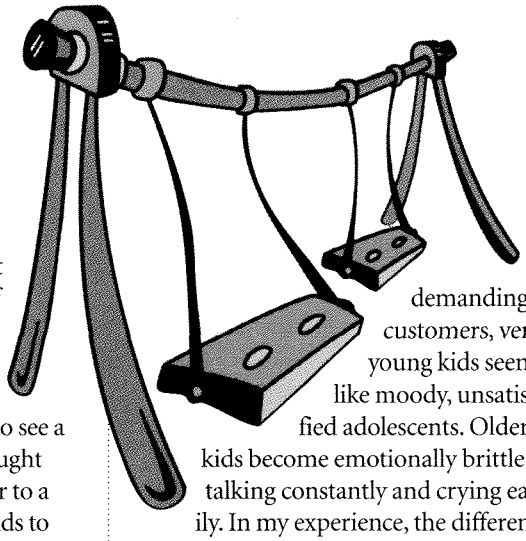
Nursery Lessons

By Brian Connelly



PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA—I'm a man who worked in high-quality professional child care for four years. I can't really recommend it to anyone. Especially not children.

I had been working freelance and part time when my wife got pregnant, and teaching children seemed like a great alternative to chasing irregular jobs. We also thought the staff discount at an expensive child care center in Pittsburgh's East End would be a great way to pay for our own child's care—a thought we soon reconsidered.

On my first day I was told that the children would address me by my first name, to avoid the feeling of a hierarchy. They in turn should never be called "honey," "buddy," or silly nicknames. Children couldn't be put in time-out, or disciplined in any way that seemed like punishment. And one should never say, "Be quiet down there, you two" (too scary). Instead, we would go with "Some friends are having trouble listening."

The guidelines made it clear: Children at this high-priced center were under no obligation to listen to an adult. They were the autonomous customers of a neutral caregiver. Those are very different rules from the ones most of us knew in childhood. Inevitably, they will produce very different grown-ups.

Mothers (never fathers) often told me, "You have such an important job." Considering that the mothers were all dropping their kids off on the way to work, which they seemed to consider *more* important, it became a bad joke. The "critical" nature of day care work, I realized, was on the order of a garbage man. Yup, it's very important that the trash be picked up. Imagine if it wasn't. You might actually have to deal with it yourself. Who wants that?

It seemed to please the moms to see a man taking care of kids. Some thought their youngsters would listen better to a male voice. (They *did* want their kids to listen; they just didn't want them to be disciplined.) The center was a prestige "socialization" site where the children of professionals networked and competed for spots in the city's finest private schools.

Day care is bad enough as an economic necessity. As an ideology, it is insufferable. The pseudo-scientific concepts and language that buttress this service industry for children have now permeated American families. Parents now talk about themselves and other adults as "caregivers," as if children have a medical condition requiring specialized knowledge. The word reduces adult relationships with children to mere safekeeping. Other roles—like moral guide, disciplinер, teacher—fade.

Thanks to media portrayals and peer pressure, the therapeutic child care model is changing what it means to be an adult and to be a child. Language is hesitant and unsure. Parents no longer say, "Pick up your toys." Instead, they ask, "Wouldn't it be better if we cleaned up now?" A mother got angry with me because I told her five-year-old to take her donut to the table. "You used the imperative," the mom said, glaring.

The problem is, children do not respond to the therapeutic model. So the adult must continually repeat. Endless choice becomes endless badgering. The effects on children's temperaments and expectations are strange. Trained to be demanding customers, very young kids seem like moody, unsatisfied adolescents. Older kids become emotionally brittle, talking constantly and crying easily. In my experience, the differences between kids who have grown up in elite child care of this sort and other children are sharp.

Many parents no longer command traditional authority over their children—because they are not authoritative, and do not spend enough time with them. Even outside of child care, many pay others to be in charge of their kids through swimming lessons, kindermusic, camps, and commercial birthday parties.

The adults who do spend time with children are part of the service economy. The children are their customers. The unseen parents are their bosses. I can tell you kids are aware of the power lines in this arrangement. "My mother pays you," a five-year-old boy at my center told a teacher who tried to make him clean up toys.

Parents in today's expensive child care, I learned, never ask the question that middle class parents used to ask of adults who had been watching their children: "Did he behave?" Instead they ask, "What kind of day did he have?" (In other words, "What did you provide for him?") As paying customers, they feel entitled to service.

They aren't doing their children—or themselves—any favors.

Brian Connelly is a writer living in Pittsburgh.

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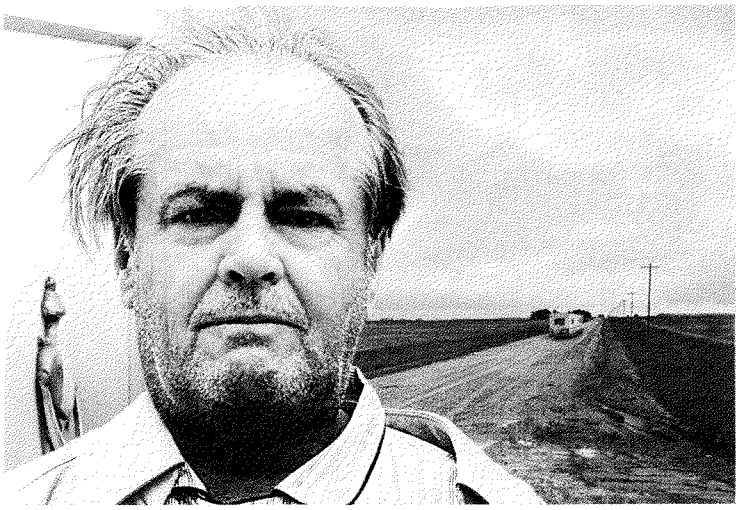
Bull Schmidt



Just a typical middle American on an average day.

©New Line Cinema

The new movie *About Schmidt* isn't really about the title character played by Jack Nicholson (an actuary for an Omaha insurance company who re-evaluates his life in the wake of his retirement). This movie is about the Midwest—and Hollywood's smug, condescending view of the supposedly dimwitted dullards who live there.

Nicholson's Warren Schmidt is a withered WASP full of buried emotions and unfounded optimism. He only opens up in the thuddingly naive letters he writes to a Tanzanian boy he's "adopted" for $22 a month through a late-night television ad, but even those gloss over the supreme drabness of his existence. When his wife dies unexpectedly—which is of no consequence to Warren aside from his inability to get satisfactory sandwiches—he decides, as a means of giving his life some significance, to try to derail his daughter's marriage to a lazy waterbed salesman.

The waterbed salesman isn't the only boob in the film. Nearly everyone we meet, from Schmidt's dowdy daughter to the haggard hero himself, strolls through life in a haze of self-deception. Sure, these characters are basically at peace, but don't they see that their world—dominated by flat landscapes and gray skies—is utterly lame?

Nicholson does what he can to make Schmidt vaguely human. His sighs have a tinge of compassion and his shuffle has a smidgen of sympathy. But if Nicholson, like Schmidt, is an optimist, director Alexander Payne and screenwriter Jim Taylor are dedicated pessimists and despisers of the booboisie. Any time Schmidt attains some modicum of happiness, the filmmakers throw another humiliation in his face.

A regular team, Payne and Taylor have always dealt in satire, but they've previously chosen fairer targets. Their debut, *Citizen Ruth*, was a bold skewering of the fanaticism on both sides of the abortion debate, while *Election*, their 1999 triumph, used the device of a rigged high-school election to deride the pettiness of big-time politics.

Who knows why this time around they've decided to lampoon a Midwestern everyman? Considering that movie theaters actually do exist in that vast expanse between New York City and Los Angeles (or so I've heard), releasing a commercial film mocking middle Americans is a bit like speaking ill of your employer while he's in the same room. Unless, of course, the target is too stupid to understand what you're saying.

If you've been paying attention to the fawning reviews this film has received, you know I'm voicing a minority opinion. A fellow Chicago critic picked *About Schmidt* as the year's very best movie—because he believes it accurately depicts the Midwest in which he lives. I'd hate to have grown up in his neighborhood.

The Midwest we see on this screen is one of monolithic skyscrapers, sterile suburbs, and banal chain restaurants. Chicago's worldwide reputation for interesting architecture, the charming small towns dotting the Great Plains, authentic Kansas City barbecue—none of these details are anywhere in sight. And there's a reason for that—no movie extolling the wholesomeness of America's Midwest would ever win an award from most movie critics.

Somehow it's not a surprise that the first group to pronounce *About Schmidt* the top film of the year was the Los Angeles Film Critics Association. Over on the other side of the country, meanwhile, *Time*'s Richard Schickel bemoaned his Midwestern youth spent among men precisely like Warren Schmidt. "I was raised among them, though I fled their phlegmish company decades ago to join the chattering classes," he bragged obnoxiously in his December 16 review.

Schickel goes on—as others have—to interpret *About Schmidt* as a valentine to the "lower classes" of the Midwest, offering as his best evidence the fact that Payne, the director, is a native of Omaha. But couldn't this just mean that Payne, much like Schickel, is simply exorcising a personal past that he has come to view as ridiculous, frantically shaking his coat like a dog with fleas?

Only Mr. Payne knows for sure what he meant to accomplish with this movie. But he's left us one glaring clue. In a *New York Times* profile, this longtime Nebraska resident announced he is moving. Where? To Hollywood, of course.

—Josh Larsen

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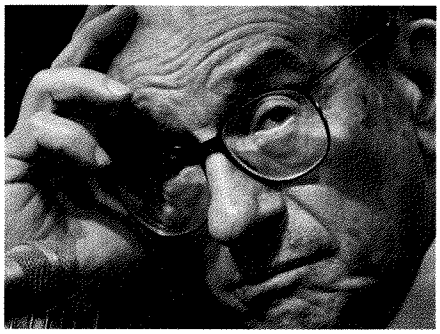
Forward Observer

James Glassman

Praise the Boom, Don't Bury It



©AP Photo/Doug Mills

Revisionists, acting with what author Michael Lewis calls a "mob mentality," have turned on the 1990s. They're lynching a decade. Its crime? Mindless greed. These journalists, pundits, and politicians enjoy attacking Alan Greenspan as the sheriff who stood by while the reckless decade went on its rampage.

Typical of the scolds is John Cassidy of *The New Yorker*. "If anyone had the moral and intellectual authority to prick the bubble, it was Greenspan," he writes. Gretchen Morgenson of the *New York Times* likewise cites the Federal Reserve chairman's "inaction in the face of an obvious stock market mania." The truth is that the 1990s boom created record prosperity, and produced new ideas and inventions that will continue to enrich American lives far into the future. It's time not to bury the last decade but to praise it—and Greenspan, too.

First, distinguish between the stock market and the economy. Yes, the Dow Jones Industrial Average fell from over 11,000 to near 7,000, and the Nasdaq Composite, at its depth, lost more than three quarters of its value. But the economy itself took no such swoon. Between 1992 and 2002, economic growth averaged 3.7 percent a year. Fully 17 million new jobs were created.

As for the stock market: Stock prices are determined by the views that millions of buyers and sellers hold today about the profits companies will earn in the future. Investors often become too optimistic, especially about individual sectors or companies. Just as often, they get too pessimistic. Bubbles (if that's what you want to call the periods of excessive optimism) are only "obvious" in retrospect.

But just for fun, let's assume policymakers in Washington are smarter than investors and can identify bubbles early on. What should policymakers do? That is the question Greenspan addressed in an important speech on December 19: "Whether incipient bubbles can be detected in real time and whether, once detected, they can be defused without inadvertently precipitating still greater adverse consequences for the economy remains in doubt." In classic hedged Greenspan-speak that means: Don't expect miracles from regulators.

Sharp increases in stock prices almost always occur during periods of economic stability and growth. The best way for the Fed to force prices down would be to disrupt that stability by raising interest rates, even if inflation is low. The essence of bubble-pricking policy is to wreck the economy in order to save it. That's an absurd idea. Yet it's what *The Economist* magazine and others beseeched the Fed to do throughout the second half of the 1990s—even though inflation averaged 2.4 percent (half the postwar average).

In her wiser-than-thou swipe at Greenspan, the *Times*'s Morgenson suggests that his view of "the bubble" was that "it was so very pretty." Nonsense. If there is a valid criticism of Greenspan during the boom period, it is that he *did* try to reduce stock prices, and overdid it. In his famous Boyer lecture at AEI's annual dinner on December 5, 1996, Greenspan spoke against the dangers of "irrational exuberance" in the stock market. High stock prices were a major reason the Fed raised interest rates six times between June 30, 1999 and May 16, 2000—from 4.75 percent to 6 percent—even though no inflation was in sight. The result was to nip growth in the bud and send the market tumbling.

Overall, however, Greenspan was more restrained than other Fed chairmen might have been. He courageously resisted raising rates earlier, because he saw strong indications that productivity was rising and, as a result, inflation was likely to remain tame. He understood that growth alone does not create inflation. The decline in the stock market hurt many investors. But as Lewis writes, "An obvious point about stock market downturns always seems to get lost right after one of them occurs. Stock losses are not losses to society." Internet stocks may have tanked, but the Internet isn't going away. Companies that no longer exist invented new microchips, hardware, and software that remain here for us to use. The knowledge and goods created in the '90s did not vaporize when share prices declined.

But I'm worried that the revisionist view of our high-tech boom will prevail, and that the next Fed chairman will be pressured to use monetary policy to "guide" stock prices to levels meeting the approval of *The Economist* and the *New York Times*. Now that's scary.

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Time to Woo India?

By Thomas Donnelly

The cheek-to-cheek relationship between America and her principal Cold War partners has famously soured, with perhaps a permanent breakup in the offing. Even if U.S.-European affairs can be patched up, it is time for the Bush administration to play the field and come up with some new geopolitical partners: "Young, fit, sole superpower seeks like-minded democracies for long-term relationship. Must be willing to use military power, even preemptively. Turn-offs: rogue regimes, terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, proliferation, ethnic cleansing. Turn-ons: life, liberty, pursuit of happiness."

With no Soviet-style chess match underway, the United States need not tolerate the unsavory regimes it sometimes made common cause with during the Cold War. We are freer to use our power to advance the cause of freedom. Of course there are new strategic considerations, shaped by the war on terrorists and terror-loving states in the Middle East, as well as by concerns over the future of China, the most likely candidate as a great power rival.

With these two factors in mind, perhaps the most alluring partner for the United States in the century ahead is India. Although underreported in the American press at the time, one of the major initiatives of the early Bush administration was an opening to New Delhi undertaken by Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage.

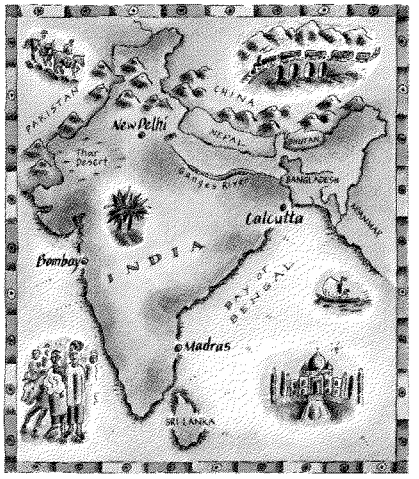
While there is much work to do to repair past decades of rancorous relations between India and the United States—and many misconceptions to overcome, such as the perceived danger of India's nuclear program—a sound basis for future cooperation exists.

First and foremost, India is a strong democracy. Not only is India the world's largest democracy, it is an increasingly stable one. It also boasts the world's largest Muslim population (more than 120 million) that is genuinely free. Even Democracy in Turkey is limited in comparison.

As its democracy has deepened, India has become, haltingly, a more decent society. Despite the epic violence of the past and the intermittent violence that continues to plague the country, "today's India," observes Ralph Peters in the U.S. Army War College journal *Parameters,* "is to a far greater degree the story of the dog that didn't bark, of the hundreds of millions of Hindus and Muslims (as well as those of other faiths) who do not kill each other and who, despite seductive prejudices, work together as Indians first, whether in the government, in the military, or in business."

That might sound like faint praise. But when one considers the Islamic extremism that threatens the fragile order in Pakistan every day, or in Bangladesh, or India's own bloody past, contemporary India does indeed seem a remarkably tolerant place. Hindu fundamentalism, while sporadically violent, has no Osama-like terrorist leader nor an al-Qaeda-type network; nor is it a rejection of modernity.

The Indian government also has behaved with striking responsibility over the past year, even at the height of tensions with Pakistan over Kashmir. The Vajpayee government seems to understand the Bush administration's need for a temporary accommodation with Pakistan; New Delhi's patience can only buttress its position as a reliable and stable future partner.



India could be an alluring partner for fending off both Islamic terrorists and a Chinese military rivalry.

Moreover, the Indian military is a serious force, not simply on land but in the Indian Ocean. It is saddled with too much Soviet-era equipment, but it has a professional officer corps and is firmly under civilian control. And the "problem" of nuclear weapons in South Asia is overwhelmingly the problem of Pakistan. The real danger is that regime's instability, not the balance of armaments.

President Bush has rightly framed the post-September 11 "war on terror" as a struggle to stabilize and democratize the Islamic world. That is an immense undertaking, and clearly intimidating to Europeans. Their weakness and reluctance should send us in search of new partners. New Delhi would be a very good place to begin.

Thomas Donnelly is a resident fellow at the American Enterprise Institute.

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Working Lunch

Wisdom…is social. She seeks her fellows—Thomas Jefferson

Joseph Antos

Free Market Pharmaceutical Coverage

Five expensive plans to buy prescription drugs for Medicare recipients are currently floating around Washington. All promise to create huge and permanent entitlements except one: the free-market-oriented Prescription Drug Security program proposed by AEI economist Joseph Antos, which is now drawing attention from the media and Congress.

TAE: Does the U.S. need a publicly funded prescription drug benefit for all elderly and disabled?
ANTOS: The question of *need* is always hard. I don't use the word lightly. Paying retail prices for medicines can get expensive fast. Pharmaceuticals are replacing operations and other forms of treatment in many cases. Yet right now, Medicare covers hospital stays but not drugs. We need a financing system that doesn't encourage one sort of treatment over the other. So from a public health standpoint, it does make sense to have a drug benefit.
TAE: What have you proposed?
ANTOS: Grace-Marie Turner and I are proposing a plan we call Prescription Drug Security (PDS). The core of the system is a debit card: It lets transactions be handled in an electronic way and allows any subsidies that you might receive from the government come to you by way of this card. Every person in the system would have an account: either fully subsidized, partially subsidized, or, if you have a higher income, not subsidized at all. Our proposal has a $600 subsidy limit on each account.

In addition to these individual accounts there is an insurance policy.

TAE: So how does the insurance work?
ANTOS: It's real insurance: Coverage that kicks in against unexpectedly high expenses. You see, if you try to pay for the first dollar and beyond of medicine costs, it becomes very, very expensive, as the other Congressional proposals demonstrate. Literally as much as a trillion dollars over a decade.

So how do you get a proposal that comes in at much less, as ours does? The best way is to concentrate the federal subsidies on low-income people. The other plans offer substantial subsidies to everybody—low-income old folks, high-income old folks, big spenders, people who are careful. That doesn't make sense. Our plan concentrates the federal subsidies where they're most needed—on people who have low incomes, and people who have high, unavoidable expenses.
TAE: So this saves money. Are there other advantages to the plan?
ANTOS: Yes! The key advantage is giving people control over the resources they spend, so they have a sense of ownership. If a person has health coverage that kicks in 100 percent with the first dollar of expenditure, he never really knows how much he's spending. And people just depend mindlessly on the government. But if you have $600 in an account with your name on it, and insurance coverage only for high or unexpected expenses, and the account is allowed to roll over so you can use next year whatever you don't use this year, you become a much more rational consumer, less wasteful, less reliant on the government, more responsible.

The other prescription drug proposals promise so much that even if they don't start out with price controls they will soon be forced to have them—with all the rationing problems that creates—just to pay for the blank check they've written people. Among other things, price controls would stifle innovation to develop new drugs, which hurts everybody. Whatever happens in Medicare will happen to all Americans, because the program is so huge and expensive and centralized it has tremendous leverage over the entire health care industry.

Having insurance used to mean protection against "major medical" issues. The idea of having insurance cover doctor's visits and routine things is a recent phenomenon. A lot of the expansion of health insurance was spurred by not-very-well-conceived tax breaks. But it was also spurred by medical innovation—now that doctors can do a lot more to help you at any visit, people buy more visits.
TAE: What are the chances of your PDS plan being adopted?
ANTOS: We've talked to a lot of members of Congress, and there is interest there. We've also talked to groups like the AARP and the left-leaning health care lobby Families USA. The lobbying groups are less interested. They want full first-dollar coverage of as many people as possible. But that feeds bad consumer behavior, and is impossible to handle from a budget standpoint. They need to find a compromise because complete coverage for 10 million people is not going to happen.

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the Tax Economist

Why I'll Vote for the Dividend Tax Cut

By Chris Cox

In the year 2000, for the first time ever, a majority of Americans owned stocks. Unfortunately, many savers joined this growing investor class just in time to be mauled by the most vicious bear market in years. Even profitable firms found their stock prices depressed as skittish investors abandoned many companies reporting solid earnings.

It doesn't have to be this way. Investing in equities shouldn't be a gamble, but a rational act based on the calculation that owning part of a profitable firm will produce wealth in the future either through increased value or dividends paid. It should be irrelevant that other firms are losing money. Even in a down market, a profitable company should be able to protect its investors by distributing its earnings as dividends.

But this doesn't happen as much any more. Why? Because the tax code punishes both the companies that pay dividends, and the investors who receive them.

Unlike most of the industrialized world, the United States imposes a double tax on dividends—once as corporate earnings, and then again when those earnings are distributed as dividends. The resulting rate typically exceeds 60 percent. Taxpayers making as little as $20,000 per year stand to lose almost half of their dividends to federal taxes. As a result, companies don't want to pay dividends, and all except tax-exempt investors don't want to get them.

Even high-tax nations such as France have seen the folly of this practice, and ended double taxation of dividends. But as double taxation continues in the U.S., the percentage of large companies paying zero dividends grows every year. Since 1980, the number of companies in the S&P 500 paying no dividends has tripled. Today, a majority of NASDAQ companies pay no regular dividends at all.

Shareholders have lost not only the cash flow that dividends represent, but also a valuable signal that the earnings of the corporations they hold stock in are solid and real. In a post-Enron/post-Andersen world in which every earnings report is suspect, rehabilitating dividends as proof of profitability would restore investor confidence. And eliminating the double tax is the best way to restore dividends.

When pre-tax earnings cannot survive the journey to shareholders, those shareholders become entirely dependent on a rising stock price to achieve returns on their investment. That is not healthy. If the overall market sours, even strong companies with good earnings watch their share prices take a beating.

A company's earnings should be the best predictor of its share price. But without dividends, ownership of stock is valuable only because it confers the right to sell the stock to someone else. The iron link between earnings and stock prices has been severed, and our perverse tax code has thus helped create the current failure of confidence in the stock market.

The damage that double taxation inflicts on individual savers has had a large impact on the economy as a whole. According to the Treasury Department, the double tax on dividends costs the economy as much as $25 billion per year. Economists estimate that ending the double tax on dividends could add trillions of dollars to the American stock of capital over the next decade.

Since 1980, the number of major companies paying no dividends has tripled. Why? Because our perverse tax code punishes both the companies that pay dividends, and the investors who receive them.

Beyond the economic advantages, ending the double tax on dividends is also fair. Senior citizens (who collect half of all dividends) and others who receive dividend payments should not pay taxes twice.

Many experts, over many decades, have declared our treatment of dividends to be bad tax policy. Opponents, however, resist any change that could lead to less money flowing to Washington. The irony is that the double tax on dividends—by slowing economic growth—almost certainly reduces the total amount of revenue collected by the federal government.

It's time to stop punishing companies for doing right by their shareholders, to stop hurting Americans who save and invest, and to stop damaging our economy. By ending the double taxation of dividends we can make the stock market work for all of us.

California congressman Chris Cox is chairman of the House Policy Committee.

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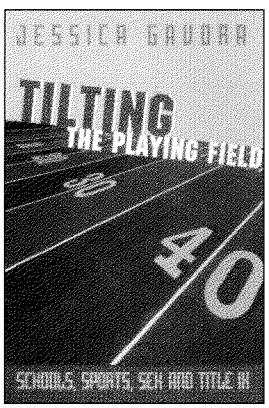
BookTalk

WOMEN 9, MEN 0

By Melana Zyla Vickers

Tilting the Playing Field: Schools, Sports, Sex, and Title IX
By Jessica Gavora
Encounter Books, 181 pages, $24.95



Across the country, programs such as men's wrestling and track have been disappearing at the rate of a half-dozen every month, having fallen prey to a bizarre twist of education policy emanating from Washington.

It's called Title IX, a 1972 statute that ostensibly bars gender discrimination in federally funded education. Well-meaning in theory, its interpretation by the Clinton administration in the 1990s has led to the carnage of men's teams. Campus athletics administrators, wary of enforcers at the Education Department's Office of Civil Rights and fearing a withdrawal of federal funds for their college, have eliminated men's teams in order to make the proportion of male to female athletes on their teams mirror the gender proportions within the student body. These quotas have forced men off teams and shut down entire male squads, while women's teams for which there was no demand have been started up to balance the numbers.

Parity-through-amputation is perhaps the best known of the Title IX vagaries, and it is now being investigated by a commission set up under President Bush. Many more results of Title IX have been adeptly chronicled by Jessica Gavora, chief speechwriter and a senior policy advisor to John Ashcroft.

As Gavora explains in *Tilting the Playing Field*, the most harm has been done by aggressive interpretations of Title IX that go far beyond the statute's intent. Consider how the statute has been used in cases of alleged sexual harassment of children and teenage girls. Gavora points out that while sexual harassment is not even mentioned in Title IX, it has served as the basis of many successful legal actions under the law.

The most eye-popping is the case of Jonathan Prevette, a six-year-old suspended from his North Carolina school after kissing a female classmate on the cheek. Then there's the Indiana elementary school that banned fourth graders from playing "boys chase the girls" at recess, on the grounds that the age-old game constituted sexual harassment. These actions, among others, followed on the heels of a "policy guidance" issued by the Clinton Education Department's Office of Civil Rights. Among other school actions that followed the guidance, according to Gavora: Nicholas Junior High in Fullerton, California banned hugging and kissing, and, to crown the sexual-harassment curricula that many students are now force-fed, high school students in Stevens Point, Wisconsin put on a play called *Alice in Sexual Assault Land.*

One case involving a charge of sexual harassment of one ten-year-old by another actually made it to the Supreme Court, where the use of Title IX to stamp out "sexual harassment" between children in such cases was supported.

The more familiar perversion of Title IX—to establish gender quotas in athletics—has also been given a nod by the Supreme Court. In 1997, the Supremes let stand a lower court's ruling that Brown University could not cut back its women's gymnastics team at the same time as it was cutting male teams, on the grounds that any cut in female athletes would be discriminatory as long as there were fewer women athletes than male on the campus. In the same decision, the lower court ruled that the only real test of non-discrimination in athletics was to compare the proportion of female athletes to the proportion of female students. Thanks to that decision, college administrators have considered the "proportionality test" to be their only safe harbor from lawsuits under Title IX.

If there's a flaw in Gavora's example-laden, well-written treatise, it's that she doesn't explain in detail the reasoning of the courts. Were the courts brainwashed by aggressive regulators in Clinton's Office of Civil Rights? Or are the decisions examples of the political Left dominating the legal realm? With the formidable imprimatur of the Supreme Court on

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these Title IX cases, one wonders whether all is lost.

Thankfully, it is not. A new lawsuit against the U.S. Department of Education's interpretation of Title IX by the National Wrestling Coaches Association and swim, track, and gymnastics coaches brought some hope in 2002. Another positive sign is the review by the Bush commission, which is due to report its findings early this year.

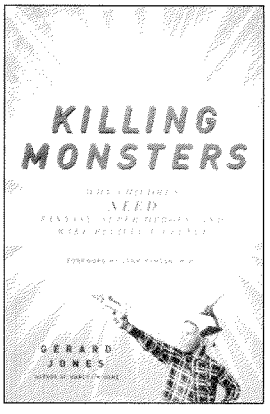
Let's hope the jurists involved in the wrestlers' lawsuit and the members of the Bush commission read Gavora's book. It will give them an excellent picture of the damage done by misguided enforcement of Title IX, and a sense of how badly the law needs to be untilted.

Melana Zyla Vickers is a senior fellow at the Independent Women's Forum.

JUNK CULTURE JIVE

By S. T. Karnick

Killing Monsters: Why Children Need Fantasy, Super Heroes, and Make-Believe Violence
By Gerard Jones
Basic Books, 272 pages, $25



The biggest cultural conflict in America during the past two decades has been between those who believe that irresponsible writers and artists are coarsening American culture beyond reclamation, and those who argue that the Constitution guarantees unfettered "freedom of expression" and that we'll just have to accept the consequences.

Both sides share a basic assumption: That all human beings have natural impulses toward violence, sexual irresponsibility, and vulgarity. While the pro-censorship camp seeks means of suppressing these urges, the liberationists want to find acceptable outlets for self-expression. Is it possible that neither side sees human beings in all of their complexity or gives full respect to individual free will?

Adding a new twist to the debate, comic book author and screenwriter Gerard Jones investigates, in *Killing Monsters: Why Children Need Fantasy, Super Heroes, and Make-Believe Violence*, exactly what young people find so attractive about imaginary violence. Jones argues that young people actually *need* to fantasize about violence, both in their play and through stories in the media and elsewhere. Doing so, he believes, gives kids an outlet for their anger and lets them see the real consequences of their own minor acts of violence, understand power relationships, and symbolically defeat the brutality they see around them.

Jones suggests that rather than causing aggressive behavior through imitation, violent entertainment provides a catharsis, noting that the baby boomers raised on a steady diet of violent comic books, TV Westerns, cop shows, and monster movies in the 1950s became the pacifists of the '60s. In the '70s, "a groundswell of sentiment against violent entertainment succeeded in altering the landscape of children's culture," removing overt violence from children's television and even some prime-time fare. Violent movies were rated R or X to keep the young out. Toy dealers phased out fake guns and swords, and the biggest maker of plastic toy soldiers stopped production. Yet juvenile crime rates *increased* dramatically.

In the 1990s, by contrast, juvenile crime rates fell, just as the children who grew up among the significantly more violent media products of the 1980s entered adolescence. Hence, Jones argues that we should not ban violent activities and entertainment, suggesting instead that parents talk with their children about what they like about these things, and learn what's really bothering them.

That's all well and good, but it lets everyone off the hook, except parents. And here it becomes clear that despite his good intentions, Jones's ideas provide no solution at all. The tension between our baser impulses and our efforts to control them is too complex for the simple notion of catharsis to explain. Talking with one's children about why they like certain violent entertainment makes sense, but it's hardly an original idea. And telling us to empathize with our children is a pretty fatuous and gooey suggestion.

Most importantly, Jones talks only about violence, and fails to consider sex and profanity, making his argument about what's wrong with popular culture today virtually useless. Media violence can glorify bad acts, but it also usually makes clear that violence *hurts.* Perhaps this is why, as Jones notes, most people tend to get their fill of violent entertainment and move on to other things.

Today's media portrayals of sexual activity, on the other hand, are an entirely different matter. Such behavior is often romanticized, sugar-coated, and seldom shown as painful to either party. Its negative consequences tend to be divorced in time from its evident pleasures.

Today's liberal elites seem to have things exactly backwards in their attitudes toward media violence versus media sex, profanity, and crudeness. Partly for some of the reasons Jones mentions, a sophisticated attitude would allow some significant leeway for media portrayals of violence (especially when realistic portrayals of its consequences are part of the script), while avoiding alluring dramatizations of sex, profanity, and vulgarity. Yes, parents should point youngsters away from pernicious trash and toward more edifying entertainment—but so should other family members, friends, neighbors, congregations, critics, and—perhaps most of all—those who make entertainment and art their profession. Sorry,

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Mr. Jones, but you're not off the hook.

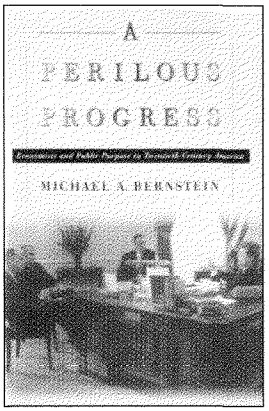
Only when all of these governors of taste and judgment fail should government enter the picture. Careful regulations can ameliorate problems when the difficulties are faced honestly and openly. But unless media professionals, average people, or public authorities step in, popular culture will often become seriously degraded, Gerald Jones's well-intentioned suggestions notwithstanding.

S. T. Karnick is editor of American Outlook.

ECONOMICS AS RELIGION

By Aaron Steelman

A Perilous Progress: Economists and Public Purpose in Twentieth-Century America
By Michael Bernstein
Princeton University Press, 376 pages, $39.50



Marx famously remarked that the job of a social scientist is not merely to understand the world, but to change it. In *A Perilous Progress*, Michael Bernstein, a professionally trained economist who teaches history at the University of California at San Diego, laments that modern-day practitioners of the dismal science have largely abandoned this goal "in favor of an increasingly introverted …discourse."

It isn't just the fact that economists employ increasingly complex theoretical models beyond the comprehension of the layman that bothers Bernstein. He is upset that mainstream economists now look askance at many forms of government activism. This is the ultimate irony, he suggests, for it was statism itself—specifically, the two World Wars—that first propelled economists into positions of national prominence. "[O]ut of the crucible of national mobilization came the beginnings of a professional identity and self-confidence that…had, up to that point, been elusive and fleeting," he writes.

Economists rode high throughout the Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson administrations, with members of the Council of Economic Advisers enjoying unprecedented influence on public policy. "Having proved its mettle in the extraordinary years of world war, and having continued to do so in the early stages of what would be an even longer cold war, modern economic theory was now deployed in an altogether novel exercise—the pursuit and maintenance of full employment growth in peacetime," argues Bernstein.

Whenever the economy seemed in danger of turning sluggish, the government could just step on the gas with an expansionary fiscal policy. And when things looked like they might overheat, it could hit the brakes. In other words, through Keynesian fine-tuning, economists could manipulate matters at will.

Then came the 1970s. The United States experienced high rates of unemployment and inflation simultaneously. What to do? The traditional answers proved fruitless. What good, after all, could come from the government hitting both the gas and the brakes at the same time? The Keynesian framework had broken down and was replaced by the "new classical" economics, which looked much more favorably on market-oriented solutions.

To Bernstein, this was a tragic moment. "Economic statecraft had abandoned the limelight of the public arena for the proverbial smoke-filled room," he writes. "The contemporary profession had turned inward, spurning the fiscal activism and frank political engagement of its forebears, preferring a more withdrawn posture that ostensibly depoliticized its work while at the same time it made more and more practitioners mere shills for particular corporate elites eager to seize upon public assets now increasingly 'privatized.'"

Bernstein is impressed by virtually none of the economic reforms of the last 25 years. The supply-side tax cuts were "one of the most highly politicized and transparently unfair transformations in national policy in modern memory." Privatization of government services has "generated productivity losses and cost inefficiencies." And deregulation of transportation has produced "a less than impressive record of economic accomplishment." These across-the-board condemnations smack of ideology rather than impartial analysis.

So does his claim that today's economists are sellouts. Bernstein is on firm ground when he says "it was statism and centralized economic policy practice" that brought economists power and influence in the middle of the twentieth century. But it does not follow that economists must forevermore embrace government intervention as the solution to all social ills. The effects of public policies are open to scrutiny, and a great many of the ambitious claims of economics from a half century ago turned out to be demonstrably false. Many undesirable results were produced. Economics is a science, not a religion, so why is Bernstein so resistant to moving on?

Bernstein's work is impressively researched, with nearly 150 pages of notes and references. The discussion of the President's Council of Economic Advisers in the 1950s and '60s is particularly informative. It's just too bad that Bernstein let his politics taint his analysis.

Aaron Steelman is an analyst at the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond. The views expressed here are his own.

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Edited by Eli Lehrer

the Digest

Summaries of important new research from the nation's universities, think tanks, and investigative publications

POLITICS

Guns Make People Safe

Joyce Lee Malcolm, *Guns and Violence: The English Experience*, Harvard University Press, 2002 (hup.harvard.edu)

In a new book, British historian Joyce Lee Malcolm finds that wider gun ownership made the U.K. safer. Before the widespread availability of firearms, she explains, "England was boisterous and violent, more so than court records reveal.... Most homicide was impulsive, committed 'in hot blood.'" With the introduction of firearms during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, England's homicide rates actually fell sharply.

This decline continued through the next century, as the right to bear arms became widely established. The national homicide level dropped by two thirds between 1660 and 1800. Malcolm concludes that "there is no sign in any of the evidence...that use of guns increased either homicide or crime generally."

The nineteenth century saw violence hit record lows. Malcolm quotes historian J. J. Tobias, who points out that people "accepted that criminals were becoming less violent, each generation seeing an improvement over the previous one." An 1839 Royal Commission concluded that "burglaries and depredations in the streets are now rarely accompanied by violence."

The latest century, however, brought two changes to this happy progress. The first was a series of restrictions on the right to bear arms. This began with odd motivations. The U.K.'s first major gun control measures, for example, were intended to stave off the threat of an armed Bolshevik revolution. Although the government encouraged citizens to arm themselves during World War II, the general thrust of policies since 1920 has been to take guns away from citizens.

In the second half of the twentieth century, the anti-gun strategy backfired. Malcolm's sixth chapter, "1953-2000: Only the Criminals Have the Guns," is a familiar catalogue of the changing character of crime in England. Crime rates in the U.K. surpassed those of the U.S. in the 1980s, and have remained higher ever since then.

Malcolm attributes the post-1950 crime surge to three factors: the disarmament of everyday people, lenient treatment of juvenile offenders, and the reduction of both police numbers and prison sentences in the name of curtailing costs. The right to self-defense has more or less ended: Malcolm quotes a legal scholar noting that the post-1953 requirement that an individual's efforts to defend himself be "reasonable" is now interpreted so severely as to "cast doubt" on whether self-defense is still recognized under British law. —*Iain Murray*

All-American Foreign Policy

Joshua Muravchik, "The Bush Manifesto," in *Commentary*, December 2002 (commentarymagazine.com)

America's official national security strategy, a statement of the country's strategic goals and objectives, has traditionally attracted little notice from the press. All that changed late last year when the first strategy document of George W. Bush's administration made headlines around the world.

In a close reading of Bush's document, AEI scholar Joshua Muravchik describes its goals and objectives, and defends it against critics on the left and right. Muravchik argues that Bush's strategy has a great deal in common with Harry Truman's containment doctrine and Woodrow Wilson's diplomatic efforts after World War I, in that it establishes a clear, achievable, and thoroughgoing strategy for fighting an amorphous enemy all over the world.

Bush's plan focuses on three goals: "fighting terrorists and tyrants"; "building good relations among the great powers"; and "encouraging free and open societies on every continent."

The strategy's most controversial aspect has been a statement that America may launch preemptive attacks against other nations. Muravchik argues that a preemptive strike has a sound basis in

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international law and, in any case, applies only to a select group of clearly defined "rogue states." Controversy has also erupted over Bush's stated intention to maintain America's military preeminence over any and all challengers. For those who question the wisdom of this objective, Muravchik points out that it is merely an effort to forestall future arms races. Even pacifists should embrace that.

Finally, Muravchik takes on critics who attack the Bush administration's supposedly unilateralist thinking. The new strategy, he observes, is not unilateralist in any meaningful sense of the term. It calls for continued cooperation with America's allies. In any case, acting only as part of a larger group is no guarantee of goodness.

In short, Muravchik sees the Bush strategy as a return to longstanding goals for American foreign policy: a combination of enlightened self-interest and a commitment to extending freedom around the globe.

SOCIETY

Medical Surprises

"Early Release of Selected Estimates Based on Data From the January-June 2002 National Health Information Survey," U.S. National Center for Health Statistics, December 31, 2002 (cdc.gov/nchs/)

For years, policy makers have fretted about the supposedly growing percentage of Americans without health insurance and Americans' inability to take care of themselves. A new government survey, though—from the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS)—shows that new government programs and strengthened private sector efforts have actually reduced the number of uninsured Americans, while also increasing the fraction of the population that does things considered vital to good health.

According to the NCHS, between 1997 and 2002, the number of Americans lacking health insurance at any given moment declined from about 41 million to 39.5 million, even as our population grew about 4 percent. The survey included among the "uninsured" people who had very limited insurance coverage, and also those who lost health insurance for as little as a day. During those five years, every major demographic group decreased its number of uninsured; the decline was most significant among children. In 1997 nearly 14 percent of those under 18 lacked health insurance. By 2002, the number had fallen below 10 percent. The major cause of this decline, the NCHS finds, is the State Children's Health Insurance Program—a new federal program that helps states provide health insurance to poor and working-class families with children. Nearly a third of the remaining uninsured are young people ages 18-24, a group that has the nation's fewest medical problems. Only about 4 percent of people answering the NCHS survey said that financial barriers ever prevented them from obtaining "needed" medical care.

By many measures, Americans are doing a better job taking care of themselves: More have a regular place to seek medical care than before, and slightly more exercise. The percentages getting vaccinations against pneumonia and tests for HIV infection have soared. And fewer people smoke or drink to excess. On the other hand, obesity has mushroomed: The proportion of Americans who are fat rose from 20 percent in 1997 to over a quarter in 2002.

SCIENCE AND ENVIRONMENT

Triple Threat?

Steven Hayward, "The New Corporate Balance Sheet: Black, Red—and Green," in *AEI Environmental Outlook,* October 2002 (aei.org)

In recent years many corporations have begun measuring performance on the basis of a "triple bottom line." This trendy new measure asks businesses to look not only at their productivity and profit-loss statements but also at vaguely defined measures of social and environmental virtue. Indeed, Green groups insist that companies pursuing environmental activism actually produce better returns for stockholders as well.

AEI fellow Steven Hayward raises questions. He finds no evidence that the focus on a "triple bottom line" leads to healthier companies. Stock indices do not show "socially conscious" corporations to be thriving. Overall, "no compelling statistical evidence proves that socially responsible corporations are more profitable or better investments than companies not on the green bandwagon." Many companies focused on environmental or social concerns rather than maximum economic efficiency—Enron among them—have been high-profile failures. Hayward acknowledges that some big businesses have done well while pursuing environmental and social concerns, but finds no link between profits and political goals.

Martian Rights?

Paul York, "The Ethics of Terraforming," in *Philosophy Now: A Magazine of Ideas*, October/November 2002 (philosophynow.org)

Since space travel first became possible, science fiction writers and scientists have imagined what it would take to modify the atmospheres and biospheres of other worlds so that humans could live on them without cumbersome equipment. This process of remaking moons or planets is referred to as terraforming. In our solar system, Mars appears the most likely candidate for terraforming. Under some proposals, terraforming (which would take several centuries to complete) might begin as soon as people land on the red planet.

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While he does not rule it out, Australian Ph.D. candidate Paul York insists that to remake another world to fit human needs raises serious moral questions.

Mars harbors no known life that terraforming could harm. Yet York believes that the cold, rocky planet itself ought to have moral rights. Any decision to reshape Mars, he believes, must weigh the "interests" of the planet against the interests of humanity. One-upping the philosophers of "animal rights" and other new theories, York calls for the creation of a moral system that encompasses all inanimate objects, including even "a method for weighing up the right of a stone to exist against the rights of a human being."

OTHER COUNTRIES

AIDS In Asia

Nicholas Eberstadt, "The Future of AIDS," in *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 2002 (foreignaffairs.org)

Exotic drug regimens now allow AIDS patients in the developed world to survive indefinitely. But the disease continues to kill millions in poorer countries. Asia could be the next hot spot. AEI fellow Nicholas Eberstadt outlines the human and economic costs of the AIDS epidemics that are about to ripple through Russia, India, and China. The loss of human talent in those three countries could lead to economic stagnation and other problems.

Eberstadt suggests those three countries need to do a better job of:

- Monitoring the spread of HIV within their borders
- Educating the public about the disease's risks
- Dealing with other sexually transmitted diseases
- Discouraging risky sexual behaviors among high risk groups.

These nations must also deal with their own internal problems which fan the spread of HIV: a poor public health network and prison system in Russia; the human blood trade in China; and a burgeoning sex business in India.

The governments of Russia, India, and China have thus far ignored the spread of HIV. If they continue on this path of willful ignorance, they may suffer more HIV infections and AIDS deaths in the coming decades than the entire rest of the world has experienced to date.

—*Rachel Jurado*

Inbred In Iraq

Steve Sailer, "Cousin Marriage Conundrum," in *American Conservative*, January 13, 2003 (amconmag.com)

If there is a U.S. attempt to build democracy in a liberated Iraq, the structure of Iraqi families may present a major stumbling block, suggests Steve Sailer. He reports that about one half of all marriages in Iraq are between either first or second cousins. This weaves clans together, and strengthens family bonds. But it also creates a sharp divide between citizens who are related and those who are not, working against the establishment of a broad, unified civil society.

The strength of family ties due to consanguinity, or the marriage of cousins, also has important implications for the ways in which a citizenry interacts with its government. Sailer credits inbreeding with "fostering intense family loyalties and strong nepotistic urges." Corruption, favoritism, and distrust of outsiders become widespread problems, slowing economic progress and retarding national unity. Incentives to marry within the family will not easily be reduced in Iraq, though. Extensive inbreeding has created localized clans that are genetically similar, and therefore likely to feel affection, altruism, loyalty, and attraction to each other.Such intense devotion to family undercuts patriotism, wider community feeling, devotion to the neutral institutions of civil society, and the principles of national equality and meritocracy.

Any culture where inbreeding is the norm, Sailer argues, has a structure so removed from that of the West that the creation of a liberal democratic nation-state may prove difficult.

—*Courtney Richard*

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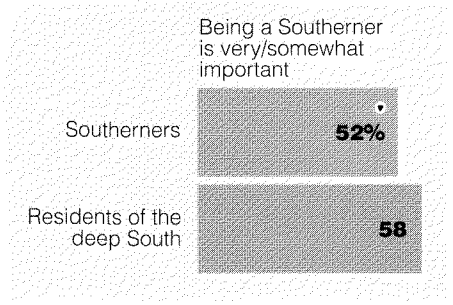
Opinion Pulse

Edited by Karlyn Bowman

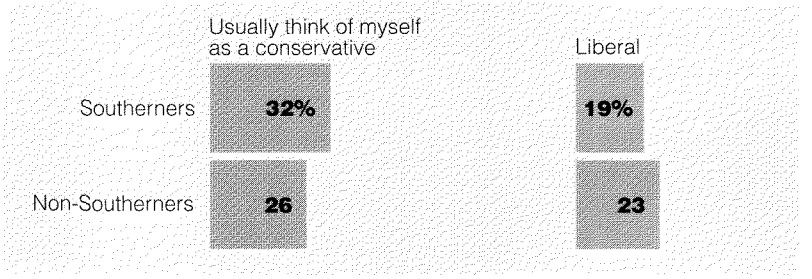
The South: Still Distinctive

Regional differences in the United States have diminished greatly over the past 50 years, though some still exist. The South remains slightly more conservative than the rest of the country, both in terms of ideological identification and also in terms of those issues that have defined the Culture Wars. The strength of religious commitment is stronger in the South than outside of the South. Southerners are more likely than non-Southerners to say grace at family meals.

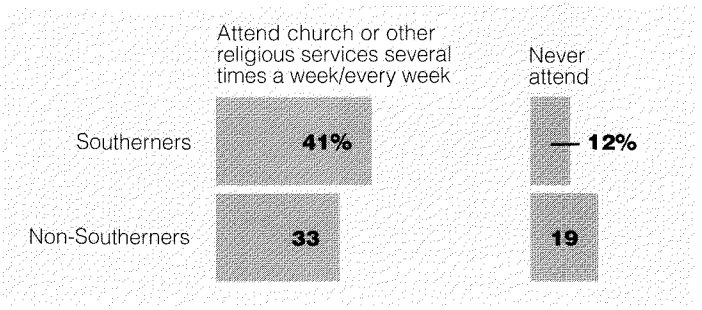
Question: Would you say...?



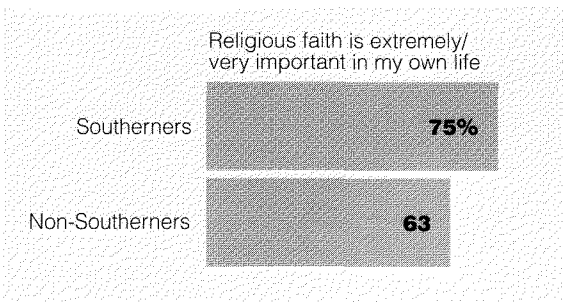
Question: In general, when it comes to politics, do you...?



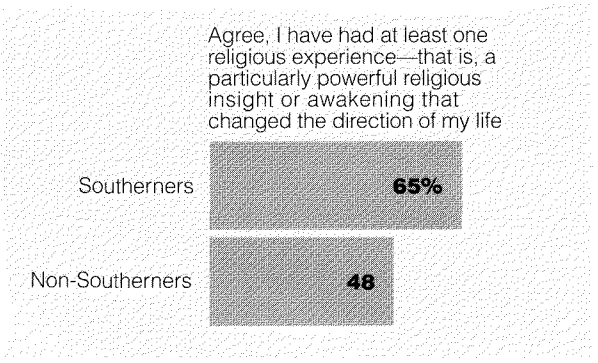
Question: How often do you...?



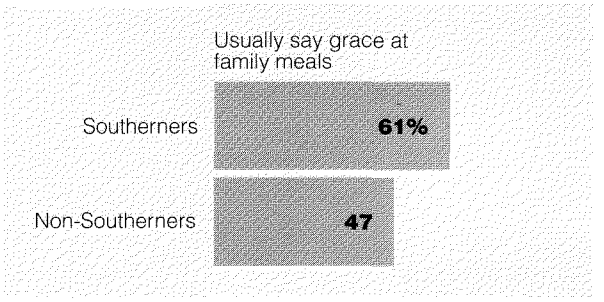
Question: How important...?



Question: Please tell me whether you agree or disagree...



Question: Do you...?



Note: Southern states in this poll are Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia.
Source: The Odom Institute for Research in Social Science for *The Atlanta Journal Constitution* and the University of North Carolina Center for the Study of the American South.
The questions above are from the Fall 1999 and Spring 2000 surveys.

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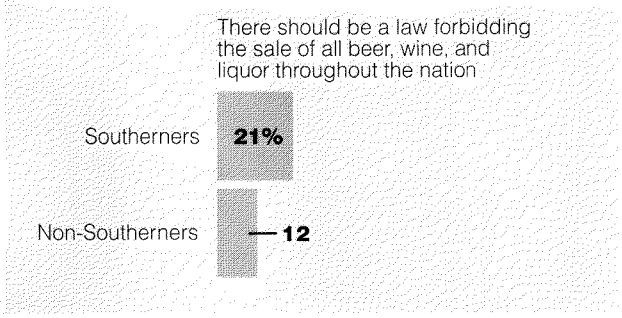
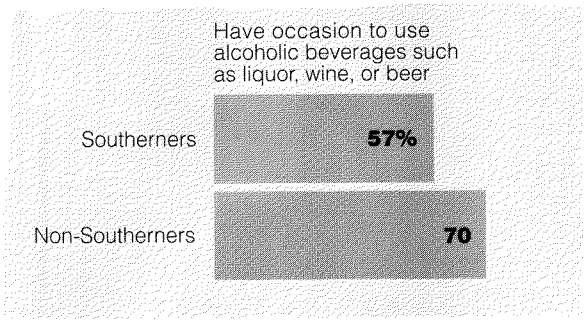
Alcohol prohibition doesn't have many supporters, but people in the South are more likely than those outside the region to favor it. More non-Southerners than Southerners approve of marriages between non-whites and whites, Jews and non-Jews, and Catholics and Protestants, though large majorities of both groups approve in all cases. Ninety-four percent of non-Southerners would support a well-qualified black for President. Ninety-one percent of Southerners give that response. About a third of non-Southerners approve of homosexual marriage; about a quarter of Southerners do.

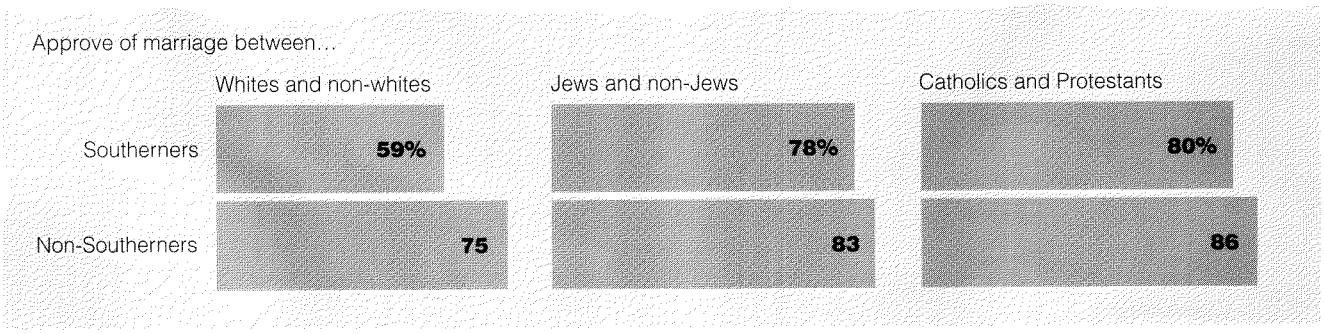
Question: In your opinion...



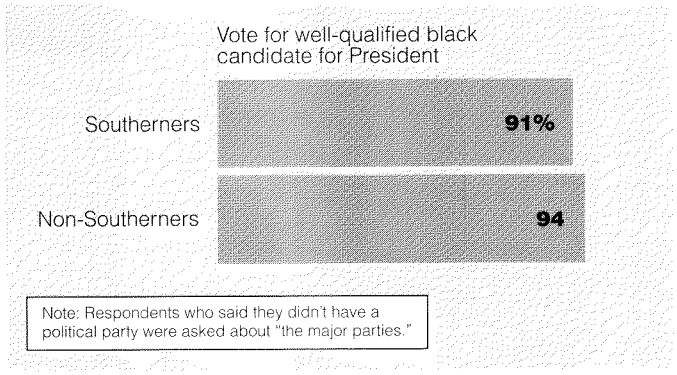
Question: Do you, yourself...?



Question: Now I have some questions about relationships between various groups of people and I'd like to know how you feel about these...

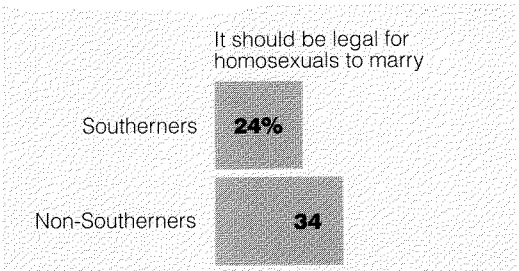


Question: If your party nominated someone for President who was generally well qualified and happened to be black, would you...?



Note: Respondents who said they didn't have a political party were asked about "the major parties."

Question: In your opinion...



Note: Southern states in this poll are Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia.
Source: The Odom Institute for Research in Social Science for *The Atlanta Journal Constitution* and the University of North Carolina Center for the Study of the American South.
The questions above are from the Fall 1999 and Spring 2000 surveys.

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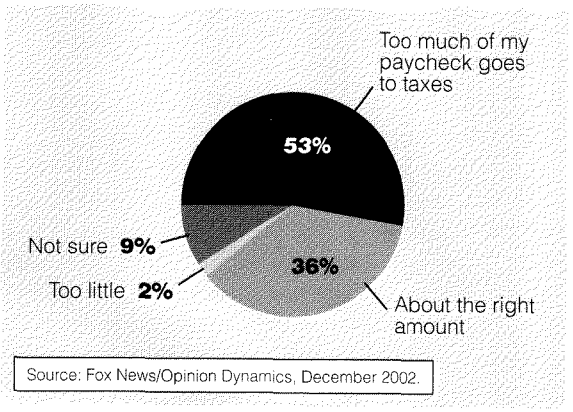
Tax Reform

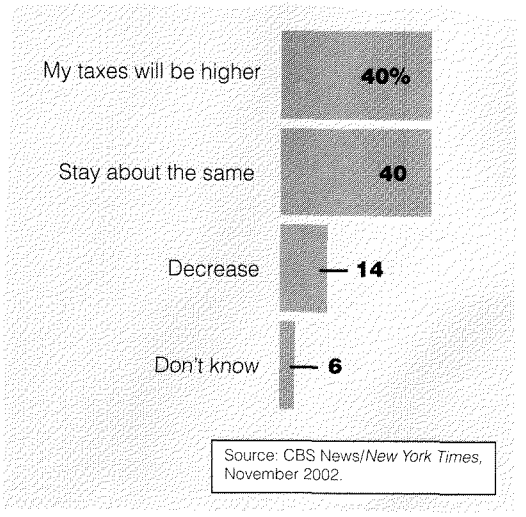
Americans have never been happy about the amount of money they pay in taxes. Four in ten believe their taxes will be higher even with the Republicans in control of Congress, with the same number saying they will stay about the same. When asked how much of every tax dollar is wasted, the median response is 47 cents. People say that tax reform should be a top priority. Even after Congressional action to gradually raise the amount at which the estate tax kicks in, four in ten still want the tax abolished.

Question: Do you think...?



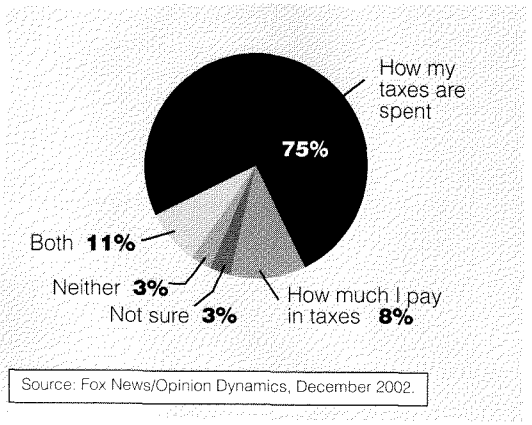
Source: Fox News/Opinion Dynamics, December 2002.

Question: With Republicans in control of Congress, do you think...?



Source: CBS News/*New York Times*, November 2002.

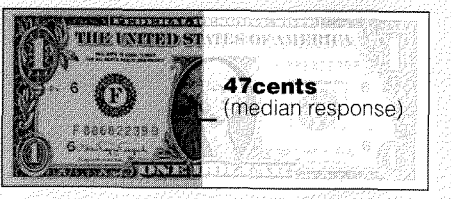
Question: Which bothers you more...?



Source: Fox News/Opinion Dynamics, December 2002.

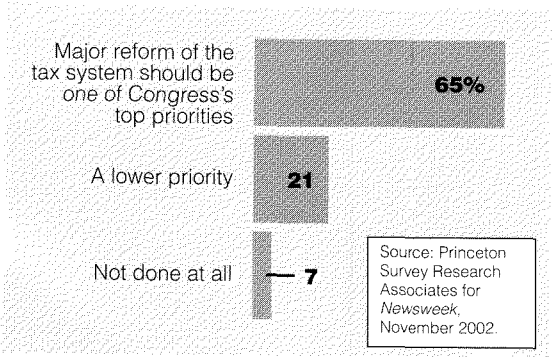
Question: Out of every tax dollar, how much...?

Amount out of every tax dollar that is wasted



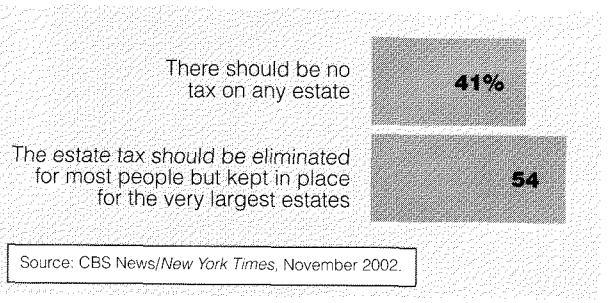
Source: ABC News, April 2002.

Question: As I read you some things the new Congress might do over the next two years, please tell me if you think each should be...



Source: Princeton Survey Research Associates for *Newsweek*, November 2002.

Question: Currently the federal government taxes the estates—that is, the property and money—people leave when they die. In a few years, that tax will only apply to estates worth more than $3.5 million and by 2010 there would be no tax on any estate, no matter what it is worth. Which comes closer to your view...?



Source: CBS News/*New York Times*, November 2002.

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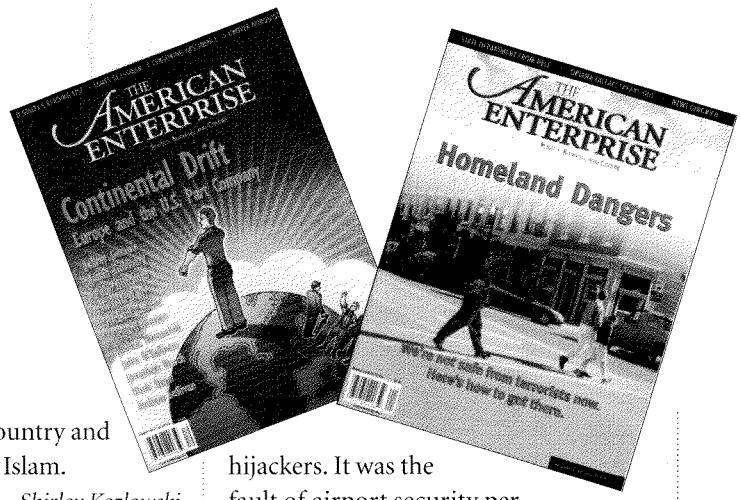

Michael Medved's diatribe against Libertarian voters (SCAN, January/February) condemns Libertarians because they don't study opinion polls to determine who can win before they vote. For Medved, ideas are beside the point.

The Libertarian Party, unlike the Republican and Democratic parties, is based on a consistent, coherent, and principled political philosophy. For the millions of Americans who cast Libertarian votes, the validity and wisdom of Libertarian principles count for more than their popularity.

Republican "principles," on the other hand, can be hard to discern. When the GOP wants votes in steel belt states, its support for free trade goes out the window. When the Republican leader, Senator Lott, finds himself in political hot water, he grovels for support on BET and reverses his position on affirmative action.

Under both Democratic and Republican leadership, government has grown rapidly, reliably, and relentlessly. For principled, consistent support of less government and more liberty, I'll keep voting Libertarian.

Brian Fenton
Atlanta, Georgia

I loved Oriana Fallaci's "How the West Was Won—and How It Will Be Lost" (January/February). Finally, someone is speaking the truth with the same passion that hundreds of thousands of Americans feel. What is happening is a cultural and religious war. I pray she speaks more, writes more, and that thousands rise up to join her to save our country and the world from militant Islam.

Shirley Kozlowski
Midland, Texas

Many of the articles in your January/February issue express distress at the progress in the war against terror. Our nation is already moving in the right direction thanks to the historic majorities achieved by President Bush and Republicans at the polls. At the President's urging, Congress took meaningful action in passing a homeland security bill and providing terrorism insurance. Both initiatives had been stalled before the election in the Democratic-controlled Senate, but have now moved forward because a majority of Americans supported Republicans at the polls.

Henry Rhyne
Gastonia, North Carolina

I enjoyed Eli Lehrer's article on the Arlington County, Virginia police ("Arlington Fights Terror," January/February 2002). It pretty much describes the status of every police department I'm aware of: struggling to get prepared, frustrated with the federal government, but still motivated and dedicated.

Chris Pascoe
Brighton, Michigan

Scott Johnson's comments ("Better Unsafe Than (Occasionally) Sorry," January/February) about David Harris' book are wrongheaded. Among other things, the non-racial-profiling system he faults did, in fact, identify most of the 9/11 hijackers. It was the fault of airport security personnel and the airlines that they were not stopped.

James Lee
New York, New York

The personal attack on me in Scott Johnson's article contains inaccuracies, distortions, as well as a breathtaking slander: that I am responsible for the success of the September 11 attacks. All of this from a writer who never even bothered to talk to me, which could have at least saved him from making many of the errors in the piece.

David Harris
University of Toledo, Ohio

Scott Johnson responds:
The article is not a personal attack on Professor Harris; it is fair comment on his book. I am not aware of any factual errors and he does not cite any. Harris also does not mention the excerpt from his book that accompanies the piece; it allows him to speak in his own words. In any case, the suggestion that I should have talked to him before critiquing his article lacks a basis in any journalistic practice. Besides, on March 7, 2002, I attended two presentations by Harris in the Twin Cities. After the first of his talks I commented as a panelist. Following the second presentation, I debated him. I regret Professor Harris has taken offense, but he is a voluntary participant in a serious debate and can expect his controversial claims to be engaged and refuted by a concerned public.

The American Enterprise welcomes your comments. Send to TAE@aei.org. Or "The Mail," The American Enterprise, 1150 17th Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036. Or fax to (202) 862–5867. Please include your home town and phone number. Published letters may be edited for length and clarity.

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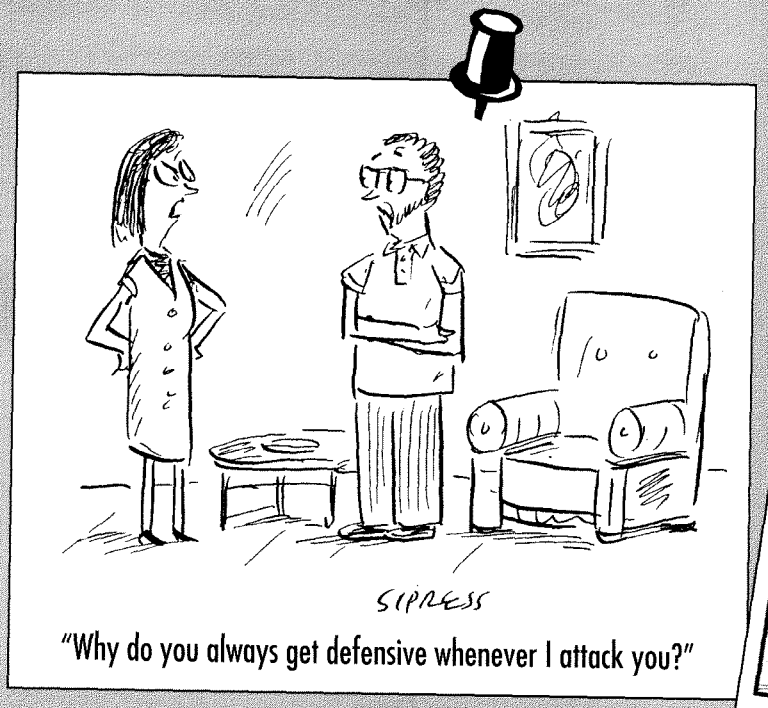
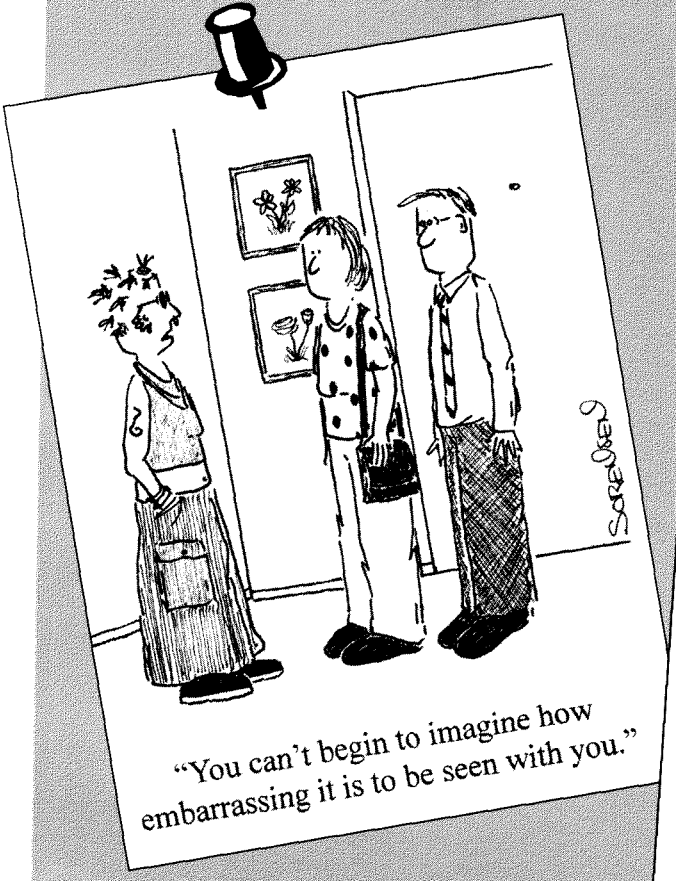


"Why do you always get defensive whenever I attack you?"

"It happens every year. We come here to decompress a bit and my husband completely *DEFLATES!*"



"You can't begin to imagine how embarrassing it is to be seen with you."

Right: Cartoon Stock LTD.

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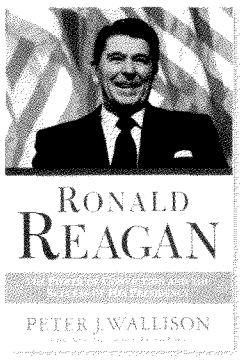

Ronald Reagan

By Peter J. Wallison

The very newest of the small handful of biographies of Ronald Reagan—written by a man who served as his White House counsel.

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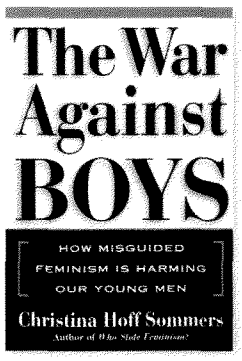

The War Against Boys

By Christina Hoff Sommers

The social and educational struggles of boys are aggravated by a prejudice that punishes them simply for being male.

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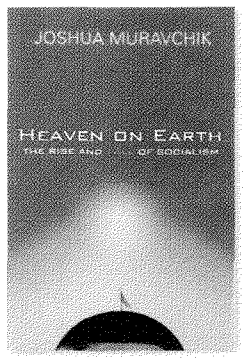

Heaven on Earth

By Joshua Muravchik

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—historian Paul Johnson

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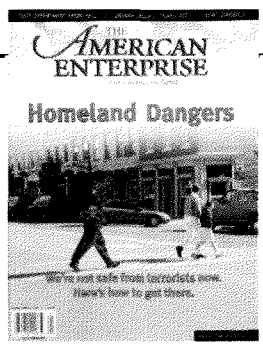

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Think TANK

with

BEN WATTENBERG

Think Tank Interviews E. O. Wilson: our viewers respond.

"Ben, your interview this morning was excellent. It's the kind of thought-provoking discussion that I enjoy most. I can hardly wait to read Wilson's book on animal behavior. Your Think Tank is the TV highlight of the week, every week! Many thanks!

Thanks for having Edward O. Wilson as your invited guest. His philosophical views made exceptionally good sense to my wife and me. We continue to enjoy most of your programs.

A marvelously rational man. But, so much of the trajectory of life is caused by improbable accident, that there is reason to believe that there will be more of the same.

Have just watched another superb dialog.

My only complaint is that you do 1/2 hour, rather than a longer show.

Loved the show today. I was recently introduced to Edward O. Wilson and am reading/browsing his 1976 book "Sociobiology." I am finding this perspective very enriching and in particular am enjoying my introduction to Edward O. Wilson. I really enjoy your show anytime, but found today to be extra sweet.

Regarding Ben Wattenberg's interview with Edward O. Wilson seen on Vermont Public Television on 12/13/02 BRAVO!! I had heard about Dr. Wilson, but never seen an interview or pursued his work. Credit to you for conducting this interview. If only other media would report more on great thinkers such as this man.

It is pleasing and helpful when you bring authors, as today there are too many books of interest to read. E.O. Wilson sounds as controversial as Malthus. Your questions and synopsis brought the discussion to reality. Thank you for these presentations.

God bless Edward O. Wilson and all those who try to help effect positive change in this poor, devastated planet.

A very interesting and intelligent guest this evening. I hope to find his book. Thank you so much.

I watched your latest offering on ants and how they parallel our human activity and future. It was enriching and certainly worth my time and attention. A good show, well done! Its my Saturday morning stimulant to focus on truly important items. I'd like my grandkids to watch your show. Once seen it can become addictive.

Just finished watching Edward Wilson from Harvard discussing with you the environment and evolution of species. Thanks for your program.

I think Wattenberg is the best interviewer on the air, and your selection of topics is unequaled."

PBS

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